

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, November 7, 1898, by Frank Tousey.

No. 297.

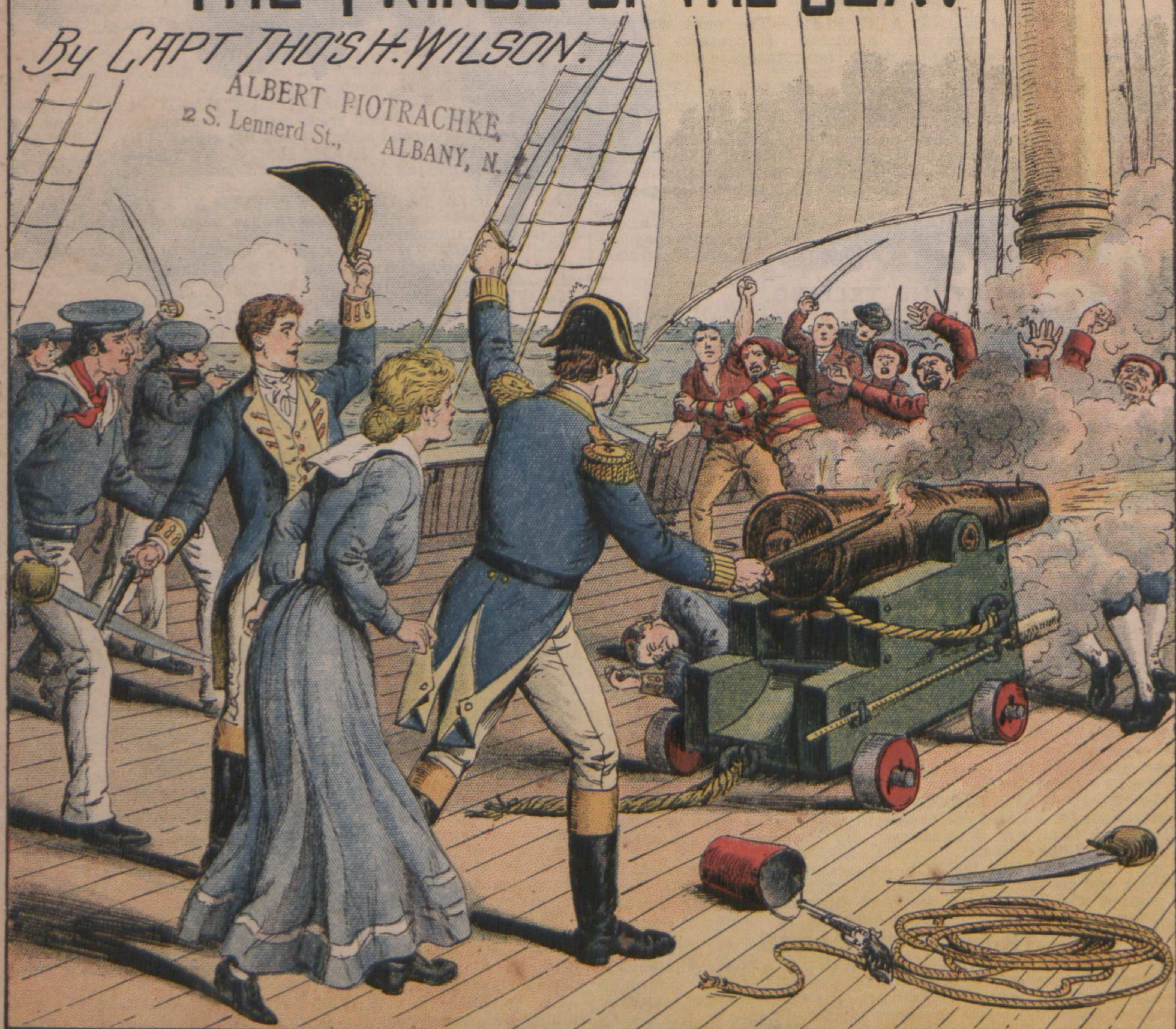
NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 10, 1904.

Price 5 Cents.

CAPTAIN JACK TEMPEST: THE PRINCE OF THE SEA!

By CAPT THO'S H. WILSON.

ALBERT PIOTRACHKE,
12 S. Lennerd St., ALBANY, N. Y.



The buccaneers made a rush forward. Jack stamped his foot impatiently. "Fire!" Then, without waiting for the execution of the order, he bounded forward and dashed the torch he still held upon the vent of the cannon. Boom!

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(Continued on page 3 of cover.)

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Captain Jack Tempest, THE PRINCE OF THE SEA.

BY CAPTAIN THOS. H. WILSON.

ALBERT PIOTRACHKE,
2 S. Lennerd St.,
ALBANY, N. Y.
CHAPTER I.

YOUNG JACK'S THREAT.

"Jack Tempest, you are a miserable vagabond, an impudent beggar, a good-for-nothing foundling! Get out of my sight! I'll have no more to do with you!"

"But, Uncle Roderick, you are unjust. Listen to me for——"

"No, no, no! Do you understand that? No! You are disgraced, and I don't want anything more to do with you!"

The conversation given above took place between two men—an old one, the uncle, past sixty, and a young one, the nephew, under twenty.

Jack Tempest was the young fellow, the son of Roderick Warden's sister-in-law, and one glance at his handsome face and manly figure was sufficient to give the lie to all that the old man had said.

Roderick Warden was the uncle of Jack, and was as hard-hearted, stubborn, and relentless an old miser as ever trod the earth.

His present cause of anger against Jack was that the young fellow had dared to make love to his ward, Flossie, whom he wished to marry to one Roger Wildrake, a rich but dissolute young fellow residing in the town.

Furthermore, in a quarrel with his rival, in which the latter had used more violent language concerning Jack's poor mother, now dead and in heaven, the young fellow had slapped the braggart's face and pitched him head-foremost into the ditch.

"I've had enough of your scrapes and wild ways," continued the old man, "and you've got to leave my house. I won't have you here another hour."

"Oh, very well," said Jack, carelessly. "My ways are no wilder than those of dozens of young fellows that you know of. At any rate, I don't drink and gamble and carouse like this precious young Roger Wildrake that I tumbled into the ditch just now."

"Silence, you beggar's brat! Young Wildrake is rich, a millionaire, and moves in the very best society."

"So does his Satanic majesty, if that goes for anything, and so, they say, does Ivan Ironhand, the pirate!"

"Silence! Leave my house. I'll have done with you at

once. You're like your mother. She had a will that the fiend himself could not shake. It's a mercy she's dead, for now I can have peace. Oh, you beggar, you foundling, you miserable nobody!"

"Take care!" hissed Jack, the blood leaving his face; "don't you dare profane the sacred memory of my sainted mother, or I will kill you!"

At that moment the butler, unobserved by both, had entered to take orders from his master, and heard these violent words, without hearing what had called them forth.

"She was nobody! She was no kin of mine. She imposed upon my poor brother. She was a shameless——"

Jack flew at the old man with the fierceness of a tiger, and seized him by the throat.

"You contemptible old villain! I could kill you for those words. Take them back, or, by heaven, I'll choke you with them!"

"Help! help! Take the young fiend off," gasped Roderick Warden, turning livid and choking with rage.

The old butler flew to his master's aid, and at sight of the newcomer, Jack let go his hold.

"Oh, Master Jack!" cried the butler, Jinks by name, "this is a terrible business. I fear you have killed him."

"Small loss if I have," returned Jack, hotly. "No fear, though; such men don't die easy, more's the pity!"

"No, they don't," snapped old Warden, coming to himself. "Remember, Jinks, that if anything happens to me, this beggar's imp, this foundling, this nobody's child, threatened my life. You will remember that?"

"Oh, Master Jack, Master Jack, why did you say that?" wailed the old servant, who was really very fond of the handsome young scapegrace.

"And now," continued Roderick Warden, rising and shaking his finger at Jack, who stood boldly before him, his arms folded across his heaving bosom, a look of scorn upon his noble features, "leave my house this instant, and never again dare to set foot within its walls."

"I will go, and be glad to end the life of misery that I have passed since a child with you; but when I go, Flossie goes with me."

"She shall not!" screamed the old man. "I'll lock her up, and to-morrow she shall marry young Wildrake. Begone,

you beggar's whelp, before I order the servants to turn you out!"

"Good-day, my dear uncle," cried Jack, with bitter emphasis, and then, as he drew his hat over his brow, turned on his heel and left the house, resolving to take Flossie away with him that very day.

Flossie Fairleigh as she was known, was a waif and an orphan, whom old Roderick Warden had brought up, his kindness to her being the one redeeming feature in his hard, merciless character, though he had spoiled even this by his desire to wed the poor girl to a dissolute young fellow of fortune, Roger Wildrake, as aforesaid.

Flossie had been found floating on a bit of a wrecked vessel, which came ashore not far from the place where Roderick lived some fifteen years previous, she being then a child of about two years.

There was nothing to identify her except the letters "F. F." worked in silk upon her clothing; and as she was found floating upon the waves, she was called Flotsam—a wrecker's term, which was shortened to Flossie and Floss, all the more appropriate on account of the wealth of golden hair which crowned her shapely head and fell in a radiant shower down her well-rounded shoulders.

Jack and Flossie had loved each other from childhood, and to be separated now was more than they could endure.

As Jack hurried along the road, after leaving his uncle's house, he met an old sailor, whom he knew slightly, by the name of Bob Gaskitt.

"Morning, Master Jack," said the man, touching his hat; "where might you be going?"

"To the ends or the dogs!" cried the boy, impetuously; and then, in a burst of confidence, such as wretched men will sometimes indulge in with strangers, he added:

"I've been turned out of the house, and old Warden—I won't own him as uncle—threatens to marry my sweetheart to that miserable villain, Roger Wildrake. I won't have it. I'll go to sea and take her with me."

"If you want to go to sea, Master Jack," said the old sailor, who was not looked upon as altogether the friend of King George—this was towards the end of the last century, the place where Jack lived being in Canada, near the Atlantic coast—and who, it was suspected, would be glad to leave the latter's service,

"If you wish to go to sea, I can furnish you with a ship and crew such as would delight your eyes. Ha, ha! you'll be the prince of the sea, my boy!"

"What do you mean?" asked Jack, beginning to suspect that the old sailor was hatching some plot against the king.

"You ain't overfond of our royal master, King George?"

"No; I hate him, and wish I'd been born an American."

"Then listen," whispered Bob, impressively, having drawn Jack to the side of the road where they would be unobserved by passers-by. His majesty's ship Speedy lies in the bay. To-night the officers attend a ball in the town. I can decoy most of the men on shore; others are my friends, and will work with me. We will seize the ship, make you the captain, sail away, and make war on Ivan Ironhand, the pirate, and all other tyrants including his majesty, and live like bucks."

"But what will become of Flossie?" asked Jack completely carried away by the old sailor's enthusiasm.

"Your sweetheart? Never fear for her. We will see to that. Now, away with you, for we mustn't be seen together. I'll go down to the quay, and if you've got a friend that you can trust, go and consult him."

"Harold Storms—he is with me in everything."

"Meet me at ten to-night on the quay, and I'll tell you how

my plans have worked. Goodby for the present. Mum's the word."

CHAPTER II.

THE CAPTURE OF THE VESSEL.

In Jack's present excited state, and suffering as he was from the sense of wrong, he did not stop to consider the danger of the course he was pursuing, but, in his old headstrong way, resolved to do anything which would end his troubles.

His friend Harold Storms, although not as impulsive as himself, was yet guided in all things by what Jack said and did, and it was therefore not to be wondered at that when Jack began to dilate upon the plan, Harold was enraptured, and declared that he would follow his friend to the world's end.

Thus neither of the boys paused to reflect upon the gravity of the situation, thinking only of adventure, and Bob Gaskitt was the better enabled to carry out a plan he had long cherished of leaving the British navy, and seeking fame and fortune for himself on the high seas, under a less strict master than his former captain.

At ten o'clock both boys met him, when he informed them that Flossie was a prisoner in a tower attached to old Warden's dwelling, and on the morrow she would be forced to wed Roger Wildrake unless this were prevented.

All this he had learned during the day, he said, besides which he had carried out his own plans successfully, so that now on board the Speedy there were but a handful of men not faithful to him, and quite a number that were.

All the officers except one or two minor ones were on shore, the others being left to take care of the vessel, but it would be an easy matter to subdue them and by the dawn the new owners would be far out to sea in command of the ship, ready for a life of daring.

"I've made all ready," he said in a whisper as he finished imparting this information, "and now to carry off the young lady, and defy old gruff and grim, by which I mean your uncle, Captain Jack."

Arrived at the foot of the tower in which Flossie was confined, Bob produced an Indian bow and a number of arrows, the use of which he explained to the two boys.

"Write a note to your sweetheart," he said to Jack, producing a taper, which he lit and held under his hat, and Jack accordingly wrote at Bob's suggestion, upon a leaf of a notebook, a few lines explaining his object.

Bob then set fire to a small ball of some resinous substance on the end of the arrow, which he then sent flying up into the air, leaving a glowing wake behind.

It struck the wooden casement of a window high up in the tower, and remained fixed there, the end bursting into a flame and attracting the poor prisoner's attention.

Jack fixed his note on a second arrow, which he shot up, and fastened in the woodwork alongside the first.

Flossie had come to the window to see what the light meant, and seeing the note she took it, and read as follows:

"Dearest—I shall send you the means of escape. Do not fear to use them.
JACK."

Then Bob sent up another arrow, attached to which was a ball of fine silk, the end reaching to the ground.

Flossie drew this in, and soon the silk was found to be attached to a stronger cord, which in time gave place to a stout line.

Beginning to comprehend Jack's intention, the maiden

drew in the line, to the end of which was attached a fine but strong ladder of rope, with a steel hook at the top, which she at once secured to the iron bars placed across the window.

"Now go up and release her," said Bob, putting a number of sharp files and saws for cutting metal into the boy's hands.

In a few minutes Jack was at the top, and sawing away at the bars, behind which stood his darling watching him with feverish anxiety.

"One will be sufficient, my darling," he said, as he cut deeper and deeper into the iron, "and then I will bear you away. My hated rival shall not have you, I swear!"

In the course of ten minutes the bar had been cut nearly in two at both ends, and it required but little exertion on Jack's part to snap it asunder.

As Jack was ascending the ladder with his lovely burden in his arms a sudden scream was heard from the room occupied by old Roderick.

"An alarm," thought Jack. "Well, they shall not take me."

Then he fairly glided down the remaining length of the ladder, and as he reached the ground a fearful cry was heard.

"Murder! There has been murder done within!"

Then lights began to flash all over the house, and Harold, seizing his friend's arm, cried, in anxious tones:

"What has happened? Did you meet him? What means this cry of murder?"

"I don't understand it," said Bob. "But come, we've no time to lose."

As they sped away in the darkness, old Jinks, the butler, was seen to throw open the window of his master's room, and, holding a lighted candle in his hand, cried out:

"My poor master has been murdered! Help! help! help!"

Lights began to flash all over the house; the confused murmur of voices was heard, and then the men and women servants began running to and fro, some hurrying outside, as if to discover the criminal lurking about the house.

Then one of the stable hands began ringing the great bell, which hung in a belfry over the main wing of the house, its tones being heard far and near.

"Haste, my masters!" cried Bob, Jack having Flossie in his arms, and Harold but a step behind. "That loud-mouthed fellow up there will arouse the whole town, and we shan't be able to get away."

Arrived at the quay, which was deserted, although men could be heard hastening toward the house of old Warden, they found a boat awaiting them, the men lying on their oars, and one holding fast to the pier, ready to shove off at a moment's notice.

"What luck, mates?" cried the man, as Bob and the two boys appeared.

"The best, only there's been an alarm raised, and they say the old man has been murdered. It's none of our doings, though."

Then he hastily bade Jack get into the boat and take the stern, Flossie sitting beside him and Harold following.

The old sailor then ordered all hands to shove out their oars, and as he leaped in the boat shot out from the pier, and pulled directly toward a good-sized schooner which lay in the stream, and whose outline could just be made out in the darkness.

As the boat was hauled alongside and the men scrambled up her sides, a slight commotion took place on deck, but in a moment all was still again.

A ladder was let down, and Jack and Harold ascended, bearing Flossie between them.

Then the boat was hauled up and swung in the davits,

those not engaged in this work hurrying forward to get up the anchor.

The officers left in charge had been attacked so suddenly that they were overpowered before they could raise an alarm.

The men who had not joined the mutineers were secured as quickly as the officers had been, and all were speedily put under hatches.

"The Speedy is ours!" cried Bob Gaskitt. "Boys, here is our new commander, Captain Jack Tempest!"

A low murmur was heard, the men not daring to express their satisfaction in any louder tones at present, and then all hands set to work.

The anchor was raised, the cable stowed below, sail made, a man put at the helm, and then, as the Speedy caught the first breeze of morning, she flew through the water, leaving the little town far behind.

"What does this mean, Jack?" asked Flossie, who had been escorted to the cabin by Harold, when her boy lover at last appeared before her.

"It means that this vessel is mine, that I am Captain Jack Tempest; that I have taken you away from your persecutors, and that together we will sail the whole world around, leaving care and trouble far behind, and living only for each other."

CHAPTER III.

NEWS FROM SHORE.

The next morning, when Jack came on deck, he found the Speedy lying at anchor some little distance from the town, and half a mile from shore, Bob Gaskitt having taken the liberty to stop her.

"We haven't got all our men on board yet, Captain," he explained, "and some of them will be along shortly, I reckon. After that I won't pretend to interfere, but turn over the whole command to you."

"I have gone so far now that I cannot turn back," murmured Jack, in a determined tone. "I suppose I will be called a pirate, but I care nothing for the opinions of King George of England, and him and them I defy."

An hour later a signal was seen from the shore and a boat lowered presently, bringing back half a dozen men, mostly new recruits for the vessel, the leader being a friend of Bob's, by the name of Tom Trumper."

This man had a paper in his hand, which had evidently been torn from some bulletin-post, and this he handed to Bob, who gave it to our hero, the latter glancing hastily over it and repressing an exclamation of surprise.

"What news do you bring from the town, my man?" he asked.

"The Speedy has been missed, sir, and there's a great ado about it. They do say that they're going to chase us, but they've nothing now in port that can beat us."

"And of this murder—do they say more of it? How did it happen?"

"Well, sir, a strange man in a cloak was seen loitering about the place last night, and after the alarm someone saw him run out of the house. The old man shouted for help just once, but that alarmed the butler, and he aroused everybody."

"This paper declares me to be the murderer, and offers a reward for my capture, and is signed by Esquire Dodden and his secretary. I swear before you all that I am innocent of this crime."

"They say, sir, that you and the old man quarreled yesterday, and that the butler heard you say you would kill him."

Then turning to Harold and Flossie, who had both come on deck, he said:

"You know, Flossie, that after releasing you I came directly down; and you, Hal, know that I went straight up the ladder without stopping on the way. You do not believe——"

"It's a bad business, Captain Jack," spoke up Bob Gaskitt, "but not one of us here believes you did it, and we're all going to stand by ye."

"Yes—yes! Hurrah for Captain Jack Tempest!" roared all the men in chorus.

"Why is it thought that I committed the murder, my man?" then asked Jack, turning to Tony Trumper.

"The old man when found was dying, and could not speak, but could write, and he wrote out something of a description of his assailant before he died. There was a light in the room, and he was able to see something of the man who struck him, but not much. I copied it out, sir, from the printed bill."

"Give it to me," cried Jack, excitedly, and Tom gave him a paper on which was written:

"Young man about twenty; tall and lithe; white hands; broad shoulders; good looking; dark hair and eyes; scar on right hand; believe him to be beyond a doubt my nephew, Jack Tempest."

"My God! the description was sufficient without my name," cried Jack, handing the paper to Harold. "It could not be closer. Believe me, comrades all, there is some horrible mistake here."

"Again," resumed Tom Trumper, "a hat and cloak were found in the room, and these are sworn to as belonging to the captain. It's a hard case."

"But I wore no cloak last night!" cried Jack, turning to Bob Gaskitt, who corroborated this assertion.

"Go on!" cried Jack, nervously, seeing Tom hesitate. "Speak; there is something else?"

"The butler says that when he entered the room after the first alarm, he saw a young man getting out of the window."

"Yes—yes."

"He cannot swear that it wasn't you but won't say that it was."

"Faithful old Jinks," murmured Jack. "He always tried to help and screen me. But enough of this. I am innocent of this crime, and can prove that I was not in that part of the house——"

"To do that you will have to produce Flossie as a witness," interrupted Harold.

"No, no, I will not do that. I will not place her in the power of that villain, Wildrake."

"Master Jack," spoke up Bob Gaskitt, at this juncture, "the case is in a bad way just at present, and I'd advise you to leave the town. If you could do something big now, it would see the popular tide in your favor."

"Well, well; what do you——"

"The pirate Ironhand is in these waters. Suppose you catch him."

"I'll try it."

"Good!"

"Hurrah!" cried Bob. "Now, boys, give our captain a rouser."

"A cheer for Captain Jack Tempest!"

"Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!"

"Now, then, away with us!" said Bob, when the cheering ceased. "Captain, we are ready for orders."

"The prisoners—we must not take them away with us."

"True. Tom Trumper, you and some of the lads bring 'em on deck."

The prisoners—about a dozen in number—were now released and asked if they would join an expedition in search of Ironhand, the pirate.

Half a dozen of them were willing to forsake the service of the king, and as they seemed sincere, they were allowed to remain and form a part of the crew, the rest being put on shore some ten miles further down the coast, and obliged to make their way back to town as best they might.

Captain Jack then took command, and with Harold as his lieutenant, and Bob Gaskitt as boatswain, set sail in search of the pirate.

CHAPTER IV.

IRONHAND, THE PIRATE.

The Speedy was rushing along under full sail two days later, Jack having got wind of the pirate at a place down the coast where they had stopped for supplies, when someone on deck was heard to call out:

"Sail ho!"

"See what it is, Hal," said Jack, who was in his cabin conversing with Flossie.

Harold went on deck and interrogated Bob as to the identity of the stranger.

"Is it the pirate, boatswain?"

"Wull, it's one kind, but not the one we want. It's a sort of land pirate."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, the sail we saw turns out to be only a small boat with one man in it, and if I ain't mistaken I make him out to be that lawyer chap whose name was put to the notice of offering a reward for the captain."

"Not Esquire Dodden!"

"No, but his jackal, Master Timothy."

"The clerk?"

At this moment the newcomer jumped on deck and walked aft, the boat, which had been nearly run down, having been abandoned.

Master Timothy Barrister, Esq., as he styled himself, was very short in stature, the size of his head and feet making up, however, for his lack in height.

His ears were almost wings, standing straight out from his head, his feet were like boats, and his hands each as big as two ordinary ones, his nose a flaming beacon, and his eyes small and twinkling.

He could not be called a dwarf—his form, though short, being properly proportioned except as regarded his hands, feet and head, which looked as though they had been left over from the supply given to giants and furnished to him because the stock of smaller ones had run out.

This singular-looking personage, dressed in a blue swallow-tail coat with brass buttons, drab knee-breeches and black silk stockings, and wearing a cocked hat and an immense fob-chain, now advanced, and pulling himself together, as it were, took a pinch of snuff and then bellowed forth, his big voice sounding strange from his diminutive body:

"Who commands this vessel?"

"Captain Jack Tempest."

"Show him to me. I demand his surrender."

"Upon what authority?"

"This," and the little man with the big head produced a roll of parchment on which was inscribed the following:

\$5,000 REWARD!

"The above reward will be paid for the capture of Jack Tempest, charged with murder in taking the life of the late

Roderick Warden, deceased, and with piracy, in that he did, on the night of August 25, 1795, seize and take by force his majesty's cutter Speedy, ten guns, making prisoners of six of her crew.

"And a further reward of 100 pounds each is offered for the capture of Harold Storms, Robert Gaskitt, Thomas Trumper, Edward Spanker and William Bunk, aiders and abettors of said Jack Tempest in this piratical robbery.

"And a further reward of 1,000 pounds is offered for the recovery of a young woman known as Flossie Fairleigh, kidnapped from the mansion of the late Roderick Warden, on the night of August 25, 1795, as aforesaid.

"And all lawful subjects are hereby warned not to harbor or aid the said Jack Tempest, or any of his comrades, on pain of death, and all masters of vessels are required to use their utmost efforts to run down the pirate.

"SAMUEL DODDEN, Magistrate.

"TIMOTHY BARRISTER, Clerk."

While the reading of the proclamation was going on, Jack came on deck, listened attentively, and when it was finished, said:

"Keep that man a prisoner. As for this document, I will take charge of that."

"Me a prisoner?" bawled Master Timothy; "why, sir, this is an outrage. I dispute your right, sir; and you," looking at Harold, "I shall hold you particeps criminis in this affair."

"Whatever you like," replied Harold, laughing, while Jack went below.

"Never mind that; take this for a retainer in my case," and the young fellow slipped a couple of golden sovereigns into the little man's very big and very dirty hand.

"Ah, a retainer, a fee. I might say a sine qua non," belowered the aspiring genius, pocketing the coins. "I had a brother, now who would have been invaluable to you. Ah, sir, he would have got you up a splendid defense, from a scandalum magnum to a cornu copia. Oh, he was great!"

"We may run across him."

"Why, I remember once he had to defend a man alleged to have killed seventeen persons in fifteen minutes, and all for the paltry sum of seven shillings, three half-pence and a bottle of gin.

"My brother made out an inquirendo de lunatico, if you know what that means, filed a bill of et cetera, and another of sine die, and got the man off by an alibi.

"You see, he killed the men fast enough, but the attorney for the king admitted that he was out of his mind—ergo, being out of his mind, and his mind being in the locus committus, otherwise, the place of committal, he himself was not there at all, and so could not have committed the crime."

"Putty good, Mr. Parchment," cried Bob, with a grin.

"Not Parchment, my good man; that is a mishomer, a lapsus linguae I may say. Barrister is my name."

"All right, Mr. Balusters."

"No, no, not that, but—"

"Well, don't go to buttin' me or ye'll get into trouble. Here, Tom, pass this fellow down below. He'll do to amuse the boys. They haven't seen a monkey that can talk so natural in all their lives."

So the spluttering lawyer was thrust below to afford amusements for the men, while Jack consulted Harold as to their future course.

"We will have to get away from here," mused Jack, "though I would greatly like to capture that villainous young Wildrake."

"Perhaps we shall meet him."

"If we do, let him beware, for to him I am sure I owe all my misfortunes."

Towards evening, the sun being low upon the horizon, a sail was discovered, making rapidly for the cutter.

Before long a shot came flying over the waters, striking the sea just aft of the cutter.

Then the stranger ran up his colors, the dreaded black flag, with the skull and cross-bones wrought in silver upon the sable field.

"The pirate!" cried Jack. "Now, then, boys, let's give this fellow a chase, and when night comes, turn and attack him!"

"Hurrah for Captain Jack Tempest!"

"Make ready for the fight, lads, for on this night's work depends all my future life!"

CHAPTER V.

CAPTAIN JACK'S PLUCK.

The Speedy showed a clean pair of heels, Jack's intention being to lead the pirate a lively chase until dark, and then turn upon him.

At night their small force would not be discovered, and by a bold movement they might hope to so cripple the pirate as to capture him.

They returned the shots of Ironhand, Bob Gaskitt pointing the guns, and doing his duty so well as to carry away one of the pirate's topsails, and kill three or four of his crew.

As the sun went down, the breeze decreased in strength, and in an hour after dark died out entirely, leaving the sea like glass.

"This is unlucky," muttered Jack, "for although the pirate can't come up with us, we can't get at him, and my little plan is ruined."

Both vessels lay idly on the waters about three miles apart, the pirate having hoisted lights in his rigging, though Jack as yet had not shown a single glimmer.

Time passed and no sound was heard, when presently Bob Gaskitt ran aft, and diving into the cabin, whispered, hoarsely:

"Captain Jack, the villains are coming for us in boats with muffled oars. They are not more than a cable's length away now!"

"This is growing serious. Hoist lights in the rigging; get out all the lanterns you can find."

In a few moments the Speedy was glowing with lights from stem to stern, from maintop to deck.

All hands were summoned to beat off the pirates, who were now alongside in a dozen boats.

Arms had been hastily handed out, and Jack placed himself at the head of his gallant crew as the pirates began to swarm on deck.

A hand-to-hand combat began at once, many of Jack's men being cut down by the ferocious corsairs.

The cannon belched forth fire and smoke, but there was now but little time to load and fire, as it took all the men there were to resist the pirates' attack.

They fairly infested the deck, and Jack and his men were but as a handful compared to the horde that now surrounded them.

Some of the pirates had made their way below, and presently Flossie came rushing on deck, terror depicted in every movement, and running to Jack, sought protection at his side.

"Down with em!" yelled Bob Gaskitt, sweeping in upon the pirates with a handspike, and braining one after another.

Harold flew to Jack's side, and back to back the gallant boys fought, Flossie hanging upon her lover's arm and praying that he might be successful.

The odds were greatly against them, however, as the pirates now outnumbered them two to one, the boats having returned for fresh crews when the first ones had been discharged upon the cutter's deck.

"We shall be cut to pieces!" cried Harold. "Can we do nothing to escape?"

"Trust to me, Hal, and I will yet find a way out of our difficulties."

The forward hatch had been torn off, and the hold was now open, looking like the mouth of some yawning chasm.

Just below was the magazine, the kegs of powder being strewn about in plain sight.

"Trust me, Hal," cried Jack again, "our time has not yet come by any means."

Then suddenly rushing to the rail, he seized a torch which lay beside a gun and waved it over his head until it burst into a flame.

Rolling a keg of powder with his foot to the open hatchway, he caught the dear girl he loved so well to his breast, and cried:

"One moment, you crime-stained ruffians, listen to me one moment."

Instantly a silence as of death fell over all the scene.

"Listen," cried Jack, standing on the very edge of the hatch and raising his torch aloft.

"Speak on," cried Ironhand, who was on the other side of the hatch, opposite Jack.

"Below me is the magazine, open and full of powder," cried Jack.

A deathly pallor came upon Ironhand's face.

"Advance but one step and I throw this torch into that pit, and blow the ship and all to the four winds!"

"Hold, hold! you dare not!" cried Ironhand.

"I dare! Come to my arms, dearest. We will die together."

Then pressing the lovely girl to his breast, he held the torch right over the yawning mouth of the pit, and cried:

"Lay down your arms, every man of you, and you, Ironhand, deliver yourself up, or, by heaven, I will blow you and your whole accursed crew to perdition in one second."

There could be no doubting the brave fellow's words and a cold sweat broke out upon Ironhand's forehead, while all his followers were overcome with terror, not knowing but that the next moment might be their last.

CHAPTER VI.

MASTER TIMOTHY IN A NEW CHARACTER.

"Down into the hold with you," cried Jack, "or I'll blow the whole ship to perdition!"

There was no escape, for the pirate saw that Jack was determined to fulfil his threat if he was not instantly obeyed.

He determined to temporize, therefore.

He never doubted for an instant that he would be able to outwit the brave boy, and therefore concluded to yield for the present.

He leaped into the hold, and in an instant the hatches were closed.

At this moment Bob Gaskitt wheeled one of the heaviest guns around so that it covered a large part of the pirate crew.

"Give the word, captain, and I'll blow 'em all straight to their master—the devil!"

"Fire!"

Boom!

A puff of smoke, a column of fire, and the bodies of a score of pirates strew the deck.

"Now, my brave hearts, upon them, and spare not one!"

With the impetuosity of a whirlwind, the little handful of brave men, their gallant leader at the head, threw themselves upon the pirates stunned and dismayed by the sudden attack, and the carnage began afresh.

So fierce was the assault that many of the foe leaped headlong into the sea, while a score were cut down before they could strike a blow.

Boom!

Boom!

Rob and two or three of his trusted companions had reloaded two of the heaviest pieces on deck, and had turned them against the freebooters.

The destruction was frightful.

"He is a very fiend incarnate!" roared Satan. "Such a man ought to be with us."

"Yes, yes—we'll make him our leader!"

"Will you be our chief, Captain Jack Tempest?" asked Satan, in the lull of the fight.

"Never!" cried Jack.

"Never!" echoed his gallant little band.

"Cut them down!" roared Lieutenant Satan.

"Upon them, hearts of steel!" answered Jack, waving his flashing sword above his head.

With a roar and a rush, like that of the mighty sea itself, the brave little band swept down upon the pirates, who still greatly outnumbered them.

At the first rush Satan was thrown down and made insensible by a tremendous blow on the head from the hand of Bob Gaskitt.

The buccaneers were now virtually without a leader.

"Down with them!" roared Jack.

The attack that followed was perfectly irresistible.

Dismayed, cowed, disheartened, their leaders bereft from them, the savage crew lost all courage, and fell back in great disorder.

And at this juncture the breeze began to spring up, lightly, to be sure, but enough to put the vessel in motion.

With a last fierce, onward sweep, the young captain and his brave men cleared the deck of the pirates, and then there arose a cheer that made the vessel fairly tremble.

She began to move more rapidly through the water, while as yet the pirates' vessel remained motionless, being of much greater size and heavier build.

"Hurrah!" cried Jack. "Victory!"

"Hurrah for Captain Jack Tempest, the bravest of the brave!"

The pirates were now all gone, the dead bodies being quickly thrown after them, those of the Speedy's crew being kept for a decent burial at such time as was convenient.

Away went the little cutter, the wind being just strong enough to send her ahead at a fair rate of speed, while not sufficient to carry the pirate after her, and in the course of a couple of hours the latter had faded entirely from sight.

Tom Trumper had been wounded by a flying splinter, and although his hurt was not a serious one, it caused him considerable pain and suffering.

"We have no surgeon aboard, my lad," said Jack, "and you will have to bear it as well as you can until we can get one."

"If you please, sir," said Master Timothy, as gently as a bull calf, "I am something of a leech myself, and have practiced the healing art not a little, and shall be pleased to give you prima facie evidence of the fact."

"Are you anything of a surgeon?" asked Jack, with an amused smile.

"I am not a Galen, truly, but if this poor man will allow

me to try a little *materia medica* upon him, I will guarantee a *lapsus linguae* in a few moments; in other words, I will shut his mouth."

"I'll let you have a try," said Tom, "but remember, it's either kill or cure, which is to say, as you put it, that if you don't cure me I shall certainly kill you; so cram that into your knowledge-box among the other rubbish."

The event proved that Master Timothy possessed considerable surgical skill, and soon afforded the wounded sailor so much relief that the latter was highly delighted and voted him a trump forthwith.

"You'd better stay with us and be our deputy sawbones until we find a better," observed Bob Gaskitt. "That'll be better than goin' around tryin' to capture your superiors, and servin' proclamations on 'em. What do you think?"

"I shall be delighted to serve in the capacity of surgeon, having no mean skill in the art, and would fain try a little bit of amputation."

"Perhaps decapitation would suit as well, if not better?"

"Immeasurably so, my dear Mr. Bob."

"Well, then, perhaps we'll give ye a chance to try some of your handiwork on that villain of a pirate down in the hold, though I fancy the captain means to carry him into port and deliver him up to justice."

"Ah, yes, flat justicia, or, as the poet has it, 'Arma virumque cano.'"

"There's no canoe about it, my man, so tack ship and go below, for it'll blow great guns afore the night is over, or I am mistaken."

CHAPTER VII.

THE WRECK OF THE CUTTER AND ESCAPE OF IRONHAND.

Honest Bob Gaskitt was not mistaken, for it blew great guns indeed, and much sooner than he had expected.

Sail was taken in on the Speedy, and everything made fast, for the gale was increasing, and, worse than that, they were on a lee shore, and might at any moment be driven upon the rocks and wrecked.

The night was as black as ink, and despite the lights in the rigging, it was impossible to see further ahead than a ship's length.

The little vessel tossed and pitched upon the waves, and before long one of the guns on the spardeck broke loose from its lashings and went bounding back and forth, threatening to break in the bulwarks at every bound.

"The axes!" cried Jack. "Cut away the bulwarks!"

Smash!

The huge piece struck the foremast with a force that made it tremble from top to bottom one more such blow being all that was needed to shiver it to pieces.

Crash!

Against the bulwarks, staving them in, and then back again to the other side, striking another gun-carriage and loosing it from its lashings, swept the heavy missile, the danger becoming more imminent at every second.

"Cut away!" cried Jack.

Crash!

Splash!

The first gun slides across deck, strikes the shattered bulwarks, and with a plunge leaps into the sea.

Crash!

The second comes with full force against the already disabled mast, and shivers it nearly in two.

The strain upon the weather-shrouds topples it still further to leeward.

Then the weight of the top hamper and spars drags it still further.

"Cut away all!" yells Jack.

The men ply their axes manfully, and release the strain on the shrouds.

The tension has been too great already, however, and with a crash the mast breaks and falls, striking the rail and carrying away a large portion of it close to the deck.

The escaped gun is still crashing about the deck, and the danger of being crushed beneath it is imminent.

It suddenly takes one tremendous leap, and, reaching the breach in the bulwarks, hurls itself into the sea, splashing the spray up to the very topmasts.

"Secure the others!" cries Jack. "We must not let them break away or we shall all be lost."

Through the night the vessel continued to drive on, laboring frightfully and seeming more than once to be on the very point of capsizing.

She had never been a very stanch craft, and the gale she had now encountered tried all her powers far beyond endurance.

She was leaking badly already, and in addition her rudder had been so terribly damaged as to make it almost impossible to keep her on a straight course, so that she frequently took on heavy seas, which washed into the hold and increased the depth of the water already there.

The men were worn out with pumping, and at last Jack bade them desist, as it was now a foregone conclusion that the vessel must sink.

When the first gray signs of morning appeared in the east a terrible sight met the gaze of the gallant young captain.

A rough and ragged shore lay dead ahead of them, and the gale was driving them straight towards it.

The sound of breakers ahead had long been heard, but now the whole extent of the danger was seen.

The shore was less than half a mile ahead, and the vessel was driving towards it with awful speed.

"I've got a raft of spars ready, Captain," cried Bob, "and when you say the word I'll drop her overboard."

"Not yet, Bob."

There was little time to deliberate, however, for the end must now come in a few minutes.

It was impossible to control the direction of the vessel, and she was rushing full tilt to her doom.

Jack went below and brought Flossie on deck, just as a startled cry went up from the sailors.

The vessel had struck a sunken rock or reef, and was going to pieces, even at this very moment.

Then came a huge wave, striking on the quarter, which lifted her off the sunken reef and drove her at lightning speed towards the rocks beyond.

In another instant she had struck.

She quivered throughout all her frame; there was a frightful groaning and creaking, and then the doomed vessel split right in twain, and scattered her fragments far and wide over the waters.

Jack, clasping his darling to his breast, leaped into the sea, and was followed in a moment by Harold and some of the sailors.

A second huge wave dashed them right between two immense crags, both of which they escaped, and left them upon a narrow stretch of sandy beach beyond.

Before the third wave—the worst of all—could rush up, Jack had borne the poor girl to a place of safety among the rocks further up.

Harold and Bob Gaskitt found a refuge close at hand, and then, after the waves had somewhat subsided, the little party

augmented by Master Timothy, Tom Trumper, and one other sailor, made their way beyond the reach of the flood.

Nothing was seen of Ironhand, and it was not known whether he had perished or if he still lived.

"We are safe for the present, at all events," murmured Jack.

"But mighty wet and as hungry as sharks," put in Bob Gaskitt.

"We are on terra firma, indeed, but for all that are still in horridum bellum," added Master Timothy, "which is to say, that the war is not yet over."

"Nor won't be as long as a single lawyer lives," added Tom Trumper, by way of a settler.

CHAPTER VIII.

DELIVERANCE AT HAND.

"What concerns us first," said Jack, presently, "is to find a temporary shelter and then a ship."

"We'd better look out for Ironhand as well," suggested Harold. "He will not be likely to soon forget your defiance of him."

"Bother him," spoke up Tom Trumper. "Like as not he's dead as a herring."

"Not he," snorted Bob, "for them as is born to be hanged will never drown. Take my word for it, matey, we shall meet this fellow ag'in, and that shortly."

As they walked along the sun arose, and presently they reached a long, wide stretch of beach, where there was plenty of room to walk above the reach of the breakers.

Here they were enabled to dry their wet garments, and while Jack and Harold looked around for a place to bestow Flossie in safety, Bob Gaskitt and Tom Trumper were dispatched in search of something to eat, to procure arms and ammunition, and learn the news, if any.

After the two men had taken their departure, Harold and Jack continued along the beach with Flossie between them, and Timothy and the other surviving sailor following behind.

They had not gone far before they came to a natural opening in a high ledge of rocks, and through this they could see a cavern of considerable size.

The floor was of hard sand, there being a sort of raised platform of rock at the distance of about twenty feet from the entrance.

The archway leading into this natural cavern was rather low, so that it was necessary to stoop a little upon entering, but after proceeding about ten feet the roof arose to a considerable height as the cavern widened.

The place was supplied with considerable light from several fissures in the roof, and it was by this light that Jack and his friends were enabled to make an exploration of this singular cave.

Proceeding as far as the raised platform, they ascended by means of a short flight of steps seemingly formed by nature in the solid rock, and after walking a few paces found that there was another cavern beyond.

To reach this, however, it was necessary to pass under an arch much lower than the preceding one, though the second cavern was as high almost as the first.

"Let us rest here," suggested Jack. "It is cool and secluded, and we shall be better off than outside in the sun."

Our hero made a pillow for Flossie's head of his own and Harold's coats, and in a few moments she lay calmly sleeping, the two young men sitting not far away conversing in low tones, while Master Timothy and Ned Spanker, the sailor, withdrew to another part of the cavern, and were soon snoring lustily.

At the end of a couple of hours Jack awoke the two men, and bade them go outside and look for their companions, as it was time that they should be returning.

The lawyer and sailor went into the outer cavern at this, but Ned came running back in a moment, crying out excitedly:

"We mustn't stay here, Captain; the tide is rising, and will soon fill the cavern."

"Make your own escape, then," answered Jack, "and acquaint the men when you meet them with our situation. The water cannot fill the place, and we may just as well wait."

Ned Spanker thereupon hurried away, but he and Master Timothy were obliged to swim for it in order to get out upon the beach.

"The tide is still rising," remarked Spanker; "it must have a big rise at this point, for yonder I can see the high-water mark on the rocks."

The tide was indeed rising very rapidly, and though by this time the two comrades had reached high ground and could not see it, the outer entrance to the cavern was now completely filled with water.

Jack thought little of the matter, he and Harold being interested in the discussion of their plans for the future, and he did not, therefore, notice that the water had reached the inner cavern until he felt it lapping his feet.

"Good heaven!" he cried, leaping up and glancing around, "this is more serious than I imagined."

"The water is rising in the archway," cried Harold, "and it will be soon filled up."

"We are upon a higher level than at the doorway," added Jack, "and thus have escaped so far."

"See," whispered Harold, pointing to the entrance, "the water is halfway up to the roof now, and is boiling and bubbling most furiously."

"I could not believe it could rise so much, although I know that on this part of the coast the tides are sometimes most remarkable."

By degrees the water encroached upon them more and more, until they could see that the way to the outer cave was entirely choked up, and that to attempt to escape in that direction would be madness.

Another hour passed, and they were standing at the extreme end of the cavern against a perpendicular wall of rock, knee-deep in water.

Flossie was held aloft between them, but there was the danger of their being carried off their feet by the force of the flood, which swept into the cave with terrible force.

Higher and higher arose the tide until the two brave lads were standing waistdeep in water, their precious charge resting upon their shoulders.

At this moment a sudden gleam of light, other than that from the chinks in the roof, shone down upon them.

Looking up, Jack beheld a woman standing upon a narrow ledge of rock two or three yards above them, holding a torch in her hand and gazing down upon them.

Some secret panel had been opened, for behind her could be seen a deep recess, which before had been but the blank wall.

"Have courage," cried the woman, "and I will save you yet!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE WITCH OF THE WAVES.

"Who are you?" asked Jack, "who appears at this moment of peril in such a strange place and in so mysterious a manner?"

"It matters not, Captain Jack Tempest," answered the

other. "Let it suffice that I mean to save you. Wait but a moment and I will keep my word."

Standing upon the rock above them, with the torch shedding its ruddy light over her face and form, she looked like some weird enchantress whom they had summoned to their aid by a spell of magic.

Her appearance at such a time was indeed startling, and well might Jack feel a strange thrill as he gazed upon her.

"Wait," she said again, "and I will rescue you."

Then she disappeared, and Harold asked Jack the same question which he had mentally put to himself at the same moment:

"Who can she be?"

"I know not, but if she indeed means to rescue us we must not ask disagreeable questions in our present plight."

In a moment the woman again appeared, and then a rope ladder was let down against the face of the rock, and reaching beneath the water.

"Ascend!" said the woman, briefly, and Jack placed Flossie upon the lower rounds of the ladder and then took a place by her side.

Putting one arm about her, he supported her as he went from round to round, until he reached the ledge of rock, when he stepped off, and found himself in a narrow passage leading he knew not where, for beyond all was dark.

"Come up, Hal," he called, though the injunction was needless, as Harold was already halfway up the ladder as he spoke.

"It is well I discovered you," spoke the woman; "for such tides as this one fill all the cavern, and even invade portions of my dwelling. In another hour you must have perished."

Harold had now stepped out upon the ledge, and then pushing him quietly within the passage, the woman drew up the ladder, and folded it into a small, compact mass.

"Proceed," she said to Jack, holding the torch above her head. "I will presently follow."

The three friends, so strangely rescued, had taken but a few steps forward, when they heard a dull sound behind them.

"What is that?" asked Harold, looking back.

"The rock has closed again," answered Jack. "This is indeed a place of mysteries; for though I am instructed to go on, I do not see how I am to do so, unless I am able to pass through the solid rock; for here our path ends."

It seemed, in very fact, as if their further progress was blocked, for the solid rock arose before them like a wall, with not the least chink or crack in its whole surface.

The strange woman now passed them and struck her torch against the rock, extinguishing the flame and leaving them in profound darkness.

This was for but an instant, however, for suddenly they beheld an entrance opening before them and just in front a spacious cavern, lighted by a dozen large hanging-lamps and furnished with lounges and low divans, the floor scattered over with costly rugs, and the walls hung with rich draperies, while here and there were trophies of war on sea and land, and of the chase.

Stepping into this apartment, the woman waited for her companions to enter, then suddenly diverted their attention to a certain part of the room.

When they looked around again they were unable to discover the passage by which they had entered, the only apparent exit from the place being a door at the opposite side, partly concealed by a heavy curtain.

"Be seated," said the conductress, waving her hand toward a richly covered ottoman.

"First tell me to whom we are indebted for our rescue," said Jack.

"You wish to know who I am?"

"Yes."

"Then you shall know. They call me the Witch of the Waves!"

"The famous pirate queen!" cried Harold, in surprise.

"I have heard of you," said Jack, suppressing his emotion, "and if report speaks true, you are even more fierce and vindictive than Ivan Ironhand himself."

"Into what terrible hands have we fallen?" murmured Flossie, clinging to Jack. "Better had the waters swallowed us than to be the prisoners of this terrible woman."

"Have no fear, my pretty bird," said the Witch, almost tenderly. "Edna Lecompte, called the Witch of the Waves, does not harm sweet girls like you, and for Captain Jack Tempest, she feels a deep regard, and desires nothing more than that he should be her friend."

"Madam," returned Jack, still standing, "you seem to know me, though how you acquired this knowledge I cannot tell. You ought to be aware, then, that since acquiring my title of captain, I have sworn enmity to all pirates, be they man or woman, white or black, Christian or Pagan! Captain Jack Tempest calls no pirate his friend."

"Have you no gratitude, boy?" asked the woman, fiercely. "Did I not save your life?"

"You did, and for that I shall always feel grateful, and will exempt you from the list of those I am sworn to destroy; but never again call me friend."

"You dare not count me as a foe. You do not know my power."

"I have defied Ironhand, and I do not fear you, beautiful as you are cruel. What was your purpose in rescuing me, for I know it was not through pity alone that you came to our assistance?"

"You would know my motive?"

"Yes."

The woman clapped her hands thrice, and at the last sound the half-hidden door was suddenly thrown open, and standing before them was Ironhand, the pirate!

CHAPTER X.

A DARING ESCAPE.

The pirate gave vent to a sneering laugh, and then advancing, bowed in mock humility and said:

"Jack Tempest, you are the only man that has ever defied me successfully. Let us form a gallant trio—myself, yourself and this lady—and combining our forces, sweep the seas as they have never been swept before."

"You have already had my answer."

"There is a price set upon your head, Jack Tempest, and you are already proclaimed an outlaw for that affair of the Speedy. You cannot now live an honest life if you would. I offer you a position equal to my own. Will you accept it?"

"Never! I care not if the minions of King George declare me an outlaw, for I have forsworn all allegiance to the tyrant!" cried Jack, with flashing eyes and heaving breast.

"Good; that is my own feeling. But remember, this murder with which you are charged——"

"As there is a heaven above us, I am innocent of that."

"Your threats, your presence at the house that night, the sworn statements of the servants, your uncle's own evidence, given before he died—all these things point to you, and to you alone, as the culprit. For my own part, I think you served the old skinflint quite right to kill him."

"I care not what you think, and I do not seek your good opinion. You and I are sworn enemies, and I promise you to do all in my power to bring you to justice."

"Then you will not——"

"No."

"Perhaps your friend, who is as brave as yourself, almost, will consider——"

"Don't flatter yourself," retorted Harold, quickly. "I am at Jack's side wherever he leads. His path is my path, his decision mine."

"And what says the Witch of the Waves to this?" asked Ironhand.

"That our friends are a couple of young fools, and that we ought to drop them into the sea at once, and have done with them. I shall, however, give them one more chance."

"Be our ally, and you shall keep this girl for your bride," continued the pirate. "Refuse, and she is mine."

"Never!" hissed Jack. "Your bloody hand shall never stain hers by its profaning touch!"

"Summon my men, Ivan," said the witch, "and have these rash boys thrown into the dungeons; and as for the girl——"

"Hal, brave heart," cried Jack, suddenly, "after me! This is no place for us!"

Suddenly seizing Floss in his arms, Jack made a dash for the door, which still remained open; and in two seconds he had passed through into a long and narrow hall just beyond.

Harold flew after him; the pirate, with a bitter curse upon his lips, attempting to stop him.

A blow from the brave boy's fist took the buccaneer between the eyes, and felled him to the stone floor, where he lay stunned and bewildered.

"Lead on, Jack," cried the boy, as he passed through the portal. "Haste, old friend, for time presses."

At intervals along the passage were doors on either side and one at the further end, towards which the boys now bent their steps.

Suddenly a startling sound burst upon their ears.

Clang!

Clang!

As the sounds echoed and re-echoed through the passage, the doors on either side flew open, and a dozen fierce fellows appeared, more following close behind from the various rooms.

"We are lost!" cried Harold.

"No, no, saved!" and Jack dashed open the door at the end of the passage.

A dimly-lighted cave appeared, and at the further end they could see a ray of sunlight and a gleam of blue sky.

"Look, look!" cried Jack, slamming the door behind him as his friend passed through, "the open air is just beyond. We are saved!"

But now a chorus of fierce shouts is heard behind them, and the door flying open, the pirate horde rushes into the cavern.

"On, on, my brave Jack!" cries Harold. "Save yourself and Floss, and leave me to detain these brutes."

Towards the light and the gleam of blue sky flies Jack, while Harold covers his retreat and fells the foremost man to the earth.

His fellows, unable to pause, pitch headlong over his prostrate body, and Harold dashes forward after Jack.

In a few moments they both reach the spot whence they have seen the light.

Here a new disappointment awaits them.

They are out of the cavern, in truth, and they can see the sun and the blue sky; but of any path or way by which they can escape, there is not a trace.

They are simply at an opening in the cliff, beneath them being the sea, and from their feet down to the water a sheer cliff, fifty feet in height.

Neither to the right nor the left is there any vestige of a

path, the rocks on either side of the opening projecting far out, and rendering a passage around them utterly impossible.

"Lost! lost!" cries Harold, in despair.

"Not so! Look! Are our enemies in sight?"

"They stand in a solid mass not half a dozen yards away, blocking our path."

"They do not advance, then?"

"No, for they are certain of taking us. What a fatal mistake we have made!"

"No, no, Hal; for despite the apparent impossibility, I shall escape, and in this direction."

"Upon them!" cried Edna, the pirate queen, at this moment; "but see that no harm comes to the girl."

"Jack, Jack, they are coming."

"Then I must be off. Cling to me tightly, my darling."

"Oh, Jack, what would you do?"

"Will you trust me, dearest, and do whatever I wish?"

"Yes, yes," cried she, passionately clinging to him.

"Then may heaven help us both, for I am about to take a fearful risk."

"Seize them!" shrieked the witch; "do you not guess his intention?"

The pirates bounded forward and reached the opening.

Too late!

Grasping Floss in his arms, the brave boy suddenly sprang out from the rock towards the sea, and in a moment was flying through space.

"Ah, the water beneath," muttered Harold. "I did not think of that."

The pirates were upon him and were about to seize him in their grasp, when he struck one a stunning blow and rushed to the edge of the precipice.

"Goodby, my friends!" he cried, with a ringing laugh. "Wherever my captain leads, there I am bound to follow!"

Then he leaped straight out from the cliff as Jack had done, cutting the air like a knife, and shooting through space like some strange bird.

The pirates crowded to the very verge of the precipice, and looked down with pale faces and bated breath.

"What see you?" cried Edna, pressing forward, while Ironhand, pale and haggard, stands just behind.

"They have both sunk from sight, and the waves are flecked with foam."

"Look again."

"The young man comes to the surface, and strikes for the base of the cliff."

"Jack Tempest?"

"No, the other. Aye! there he comes now, dashing the spray from his eyes."

"And the girl?"

"Her golden hair falls over his shoulders like a shining corselet, her head rests on his arm, while with the other he strikes for the cliff."

"She is dead?"

"No, no, she lives; she lives. Now she raises her head, and he imprints a kiss upon her beautiful cheek."

"They must not escape. What more see you?"

"They have gained the cliff and are resting upon the ledge. Ah, they are brave lads both, and worthy to be members of our band."

CHAPTER XI.

A BOLD PLAN SUGGESTED.

Jack and Harold had indeed reached the base of the cliff as described by the pirates to their queen, and they were even

now resting awhile from the fatigue and excitement caused by that fearful plunge from the cliff and the subsequent battle with the waves.

"Hasten below," cried the now angry Edna, "they must not escape. Bar their path before they get away, and bring them to me."

"If there is any way along this cliff," said Harold, after a few moments' pause, "we had better take it, for beyond a doubt that tigress above will send her minions after us."

"Yes, yes, we must not remain here, Hal," and Jack arose, supporting Flossie in his strong arms.

"Lead on, old chum, for you are better able to find the way than I, having my darling to look after."

There was a path along the base of the cliff wide enough for two persons, and on this Harold made rapid progress, presently calling back to his friend:

"The shore curves in at this point, making a wide circle; and yonder, if I mistake not, is the entrance to the cavern where we were so nearly drowned out. It is still under water, but I think I know the cliff itself."

"Look out for any secret passages, Hal, for the freebooters must have a way of getting down here, and I should not fancy having them come upon us now."

"Here is one," cried Harold a few minutes later, as he passed a hole in the rocks which evidently led above. "Hurry, Jack, for even now I think I can hear the sound of footsteps descending the rocks."

It was even so, and Jack had not gone more than a dozen steps past the spot when the pirates came swarming out.

He could hear but not see them, being hidden by a sharp turn in the path; but if he could not see them, neither could they see him, which was a great advantage at the present moment.

They soon passed out from the shadow of the cliffs, and being in more open ground, were less exposed to the danger of capture than when traversing the narrow path along the rocks.

Side by side they ran, Jack supporting Flossie, and presently their pursuers appeared in full chase.

The boys were unarmed, having lost their swords in the water, and their pistols being rendered useless by the soaking they had received, so that their present safety depended upon flight alone.

They therefore made the best of their time, and put their legs to good use, though, burdened as Jack was, he stood less chance of getting away than did Harold.

"Save yourself, Hal," he cried, "and bring our friends to the rescue."

"Leave you, Jack? No, indeed, even if I am captured. I will promise these vagabonds a sound drubbing, if nothing else, provided they catch up with us."

"See, there are more of them," cried Jack. "We shall be surrounded."

"Hurrah! those are our friends that you see, honest Bob Gaskitt, Tom Trumper and Ned Spanker. Yes, and with them is Master Timothy, who I warrant can wield a sword as valiantly as he can swing a goose-quill."

The newcomers whom Jack had suddenly seen ahead of him, and whom he had taken at first sight for pirates, were indeed their friends, and the latter, seeing the danger of the boys, now came running to their assistance.

Bob Gaskitt drew his cutlass, and as the pirates came dashing up clove the head of the foremost from crown to shoulder-blade, and with his still reeking sword made such a furious onslaught upon the rest that they were glad to fall back to a safe distance.

Tom Trumper and Ned had not been behind the daring,

fellow in bravery, as two bloody corpses showed, and the buccaneers finding that they had to do, not with two unarmed boys, but three determined men, hastily retreated in order to summon reinforcements.

Jack and his friends meantime concluded to leave this dangerous locality until such time as they could secure arms and increase their number, when they would return and attack the pirates.

"I've got news for you, Captain," said Bob, when they had left the pirates far behind. "Young Roger Wildrake has been put in command of a vessel, and is out in search of you."

"He in command of a vessel?"

"He's been appointed captain; and has got his commission from the king himself. His ship is the Vixen, twenty-four, and his crew numbers seventy-five."

"That is not enough."

"No, and the press-gang is out getting more now, not far from here in a village, as we have discovered, and in it are a lot of likely young fellows that the impressers have set their eyes on."

"By heaven, I have a plan."

"Yes, captain."

"And that is to get ourselves and these young fellows impressed upon this vessel, and then to capture it for our own use. All is fair in war, you know. Can you procure disguises?"

"Right, I can, Captain. And it's a wise head that you carry on your shoulders."

"Tell me, boatswain, is the Vixen near at hand?"

"She is; and the press-gang will get to work to-night. There's a sort of ball ahead, at the Red Dragon tavern, to-night, and it's at this that they mean to press the young fellows."

"Then get together all the young men you can, for I suppose the more the merrier is the Vixen's motto."

When they reached the edge of the village Jack, Harold, Flossie and Master Timothy hid themselves in a deserted barn, while Bob and his comrades went to procure more weapons and disguises.

It was getting on toward night, the days being quite long at this season of the year, when three young men, clad like well-to-do farmers' sons, might have been seen sitting together in the taproom of the Red Dragon tavern, engaged in conversation.

Two of these young men were the young captain and his lieutenant, and the third was Floss, who had donned male attire for convenience, and who made quite a handsome young fellow.

Preparations for the ball were going on, and so assiduous had Bob Gaskitt been in securing patrons of it that the prospect of a large attendance was already assured.

He had promised on behalf of Jack—who, he said, was a rich young farmer from abroad—that every lady with two escorts should be admitted free, Jack paying the score, so as to make the occasion more pleasant.

The plan worked so well that more than twenty young girls had two men apiece, and of a dozen others some had three, four, and even five gallants in attendance upon them.

The men of the press-gang chuckled, for they foresaw a rich harvest, and plans were laid by which the young fellows could be taken, three or four at a time, so as not to arouse suspicion.

At the ball that evening Jack saw Roger Wildrake and his officers footing it with the country girls, but, being unrecognized, was merely put down as a probable valuable addition to the crew of the Vixen by its reckless young commander.

CHAPTER XII.

JACK AND WILDRAKE.

"How is the plan working, Raven?"

"Excellently, your worship. We've collared forty odd of the young sprigs, and the men are getting ready for another batch."

"Can't you get those three young fellows drunk?"

The three were Jack and his companions, the speakers being the lieutenant of the ship Vixen and the leader of the press-gang.

"They do drink, but I never saw such heads. They can stand anything. There's a couple o' dozen young fellows here, though, that'll soon be under the table."

"Leave them to the last. It's getting late, and the thinning out of the crowd will soon lead to a break-up. When that comes I will give you a signal, and you must then rush in with your men and nab what are left. The drunkards won't give us any trouble, but the sober ones may."

"Now for the wind-up dance!" cried Jack, presently, the young commander having been posted by Bob Gaskitt as to the movements of the press-gang, into which Tom and Ned had slyly enrolled themselves.

The leading set was made up of Jack, Harold, Flossie, and Wildrake, with the prettiest girls for their partners, the others being formed by farmers, young men of leisure, sailors, officers and marines.

The dance was about to be brought to an end, when a shrill whistle was heard, the doors were thrown open, and a party of marines rushed in and surrounded the merry-makers.

"A press-gang!" shouted Jack.

"Yes, my merry man, and you're just the kind we want!" shouted a brawny sailor, clapping his hand on Jack's shoulder.

"Don't be too familiar on short acquaintance, my man," cried Jack, promptly knocking the fellow down. "You have no need to use force upon me, as I intend to join the service this very night, and so do my companions," pointing to Harold and Flossie.

"I've seen you before," cried Wildrake, suddenly coming up to Jack and staring him rudely in the face, "and at that time you wore no whiskers."

Then with a quick movement he snatched the false mustache and whiskers from Jack's face, crying loudly at the same time:

"Arrest that man! He is Captain Jack Tempest, the pirate and murderer!"

"Take back the lie in your teeth, Roger Wildrake," hissed Jack, as he struck the other a blow which caused the blood to gush from his mouth. "An outlaw I may be, for you have made me one, but a murderer, never!"

Then Jack attempted to leave the place in company with his friends, but Bob's mates, not having seen the first of the trouble, and thinking Jack's conduct but a blind to deceive the press-gang, took good pains that all three should be taken, which they were accordingly.

Every likely young fellow in the room was captured, the girls being disconsolate at the loss of their escorts, which would necessitate their going home alone, an arrangement not at all agreeable to them.

The young fellows were carried away to the ship, where those already captured had been taken, and the Vixen sailed at once, for Wildrake did not care to wait for the wrath of the older men in the town to express itself.

He had Jack taken to his own cabin, intending to keep him a close prisoner; but Harold and Flossie were put with

the others under guard, where they would remain until the vessel got well out to sea.

"Now I've got this young robber in my grasp," muttered Wildrake to himself, "my position is assured, and then all I have to do is to catch this pirate Ironhand and my fortune is made. We will see then whether Jack Tempest will interfere with me or not. No, for by all the fiends, he shall swing from the yardarm of the Vixen itself. He is an outlaw, with a price upon his head, and by all the rules of war I have a right to execute him without judge or jury, when and how I see fit."

Early the next forenoon, the Vixen being well out to sea, he bade Jack be brought into his presence, and, dismissing the jailer, said, scornfully:

"So, Jack Tempest, your career of crime is to be brought to a sudden termination. You have not made the name you expected you would when you started upon your piratical career."

Jack vouchsafed no reply to this speech, and Wildrake, seeing the contempt with which his rival regarded him written on the latter's face, determined to push the advantage which he considered he had gained, not dreaming how speedily his pride was to have a fall.

"Where have you placed the young girl whom you have abducted?" he asked. "Tell me that, and I will use my influence to have your sentence commuted to imprisonment for life."

The young captain knew very well that the other was capable of any baseness, and was well aware that, once he had Flossie in his power, Wildrake would not scruple to kill his prisoner, and he therefore remained silent.

"Where is she, I say?" demanded Wildrake, annoyed at Jack's silence, which he took for defiance.

"I shall not tell you."

"Then you shall be hanged from the yardarm this very day."

"Hang away!"

Wildrake was in a rage, and could scarcely contain himself.

He did not care so much about delivering Jack up to justice as for the getting possession of Flossie.

He would even have been satisfied to let Jack escape for the present if he could secure the young girl.

"You obstinate pig!" he hissed, "will you not tell me where she is hidden?"

"No."

"I will wring the secret from you yet. Remember, if in one hour you have not given me the information I desire, you swing into eternity."

"I am not afraid of that. The next world has no such terrors for me as it must have for you."

"Take care," growled Wildrake, looking black. "You do not know my power."

Then he went away in a rage, and gave orders for a whip to be rigged on the end of a yardarm, giving out that a prisoner was to be executed at noon.

Bob Gaskitt suspected at once who the prisoner was, and he now resolved to put his own plans into action.

He was free to come and go among the sailors, and it was not long before he had released Tom and Ned, Harold and Flossie being already among the midshipmen, entertaining them with stories about the surprise in the ballroom the night before.

By the time all preparations for the execution had been made, Bob and his comrades had seen all the young fellows impressed, and had filled their minds with thoughts of revolt.

At the hour appointed Jack was brought out on deck, and before all the assembled crew was placed under the yardarm,

a brawny sailor getting ready the noose to slip about his neck.

Poor Flossie was scarcely prevented from crying out in her terror, but Harold clapped his hand over her mouth, and whispered to her to have courage.

As the sailor was about to drop the noose over Jack's head, honest Bob suddenly sprang forward, and felling the executioner to the deck with an iron belaying-pin, shouted, in stentorian tones:

"Now, my brave lads, follow me. Down with the kidnappers! Forward, all you who love Captain Jack Tempest!"

CHAPTER XIII.

TABLES TURNED AND JACK BECOMES CAPTAIN OF ENEMY'S SHIP.

"What is this—mutiny?" cried Wildrake. "Cut down the rebels, my men! Twenty pounds for every man that is killed!"

"A hundred pounds for the villain Wildrake, alive or dead!" answered Bob.

Harold had cut the cords which pinioned Jack's arms, while Flossie pressed a brace of pistols into his hands.

Seizing a sword from a marine who had advanced to cut him down, and dropping the pistols into his belt, Jack placed himself at the head of his men, and, with a ringing shout, led them against the enemy.

"One sharp, quick blow, my friends, and the ships is ours! We outnumber them as it is! Now then, forward!"

Then the fight began in earnest.

There could be but one sequel, as Wildrake saw at once to his deep chagrin.

Every one of the impressed men had been liberated, and there was not one who would not array himself against his kidnappers.

There were many others in the crew who were disaffected already, and only required some excuse like the present to forswear their allegiance and take sides with a leader whom they liked better than Wildrake.

He saw at once that he was outwitted, and that only by the fiercest struggle could he regain the ground he had lost.

"A thousand pounds for the head of Jack Tempest!" he roared, waving his sword and trying to cheer on his men.

"Down with the tyrant, Wildrake!" cried the disaffected sailors.

Clash!

Bang!

The two parties came together with a rush, and many were hurled to the deck insensible.

Jack and Wildrake met in the very vortex of the struggle, and a space was instantly cleared for them.

It seemed to be recognized instantly by all the combatants, that upon this personal struggle the whole affair depended.

With the fall of either the other party would be victorious.

Like a flash Wildrake saw this, and at once accepted the situation.

"Now, Jack Tempest," he cried, grasping his sword firmly, "you shall die, and your daring mutiny be crushed forever!"

"I shall conquer, Roger Wildrake, and you must seek a ship elsewhere."

"So be it, if you can vanquish me."

"Then, are you ready?"

"Yes."

"On guard, then, and look to yourself, for this fight is for life or death!"

For an instant both weapons flashed in the sunlight, and then they met in midair with a ringing clash.

Back and forth, to and fro, up and down, from right to left and back again, moved the two combatants, the sparks falling in showers from their blades, whose clanging and clashing was almost constant.

Wildrake fought with the utmost desperation, for upon this battle depended his pride, his reputation, his honor, perhaps even his life.

Jack was cooler, for he had the right on his side, and knew that it was now or never with him.

After awhile he determined to force the combat to an issue, and from acting upon the defensive, suddenly assumed an offensive attitude and forced his opponent to retreat.

Clash!

Clang!

How he rained down the blows, forcing his enemy back, step by step!

Suddenly, making a feint, he took his opponent unawares, and by a quick turn by his iron wrist, sent Wildrake's sword flying from his hand and into the sea.

An honorable man would have given up the fight at once, but Wildrake was desperate, and determined to continue the struggle.

Quickly whipping out a pistol, he fired point blank at Jack's head.

Incredible as it may appear, the brave lad suddenly flashed his sword before his face and caught the bullet upon its broad blade, whence it fell flattened to the deck.

For an instant only Jack's wrist quivered, and it appeared as if he would drop his sword.

Quickly recovering his grip, however, he dashed the pistol from Wildrake's grasp.

Then, bounding forward, he tripped the young villain and caused him to fall heavily upon his back on deck.

Planting one foot upon his neck, Jack waved his sword aloft and cried in clear tones:

"The ship is ours! Whoever strikes another blow dies! Let those who adhere to me fall in rank upon the starboard side."

All but a dozen men and the officers ranged themselves according to Jack's command.

"You see that we outnumber you," he said, quietly. "Surrender your arms, and no harm shall happen to you; but refuse, and every man of you dies!"

There was no mistaking the meaning of the young man's words, for everyone could see that he meant precisely what he said, and that further resistance would be madness.

The sailors and marines threw down their arms, and Bob, according to a preconcerted arrangement, had them taken below and secured under the hatches.

The officers were free to roam at will about the cabin and quarter-deck, though Jack promised them that if they went further forward than the mainmast, they should be put in irons.

Wildrake was confined in his own stateroom, and no one allowed to see him except Bob or Tom Trumper, who carried him his meals that day.

The man felt that he was utterly disgraced and was glad enough that there was no one to look at him in his debasement.

He had set out to capture Jack Tempest, and had himself been taken, all his plans having over-reached, as they frequently do, when one attempts to accomplish too much.

The next day Jack sighted the coast where he had first sailed away in the Speedy, and calling all the prisoners on deck, he ordered the long boat to be made ready for them.

They were then forced to embark, Wildrake and his officers going last, and then with a little water and provisions, and

but three or four oars with which to reach the distant shore, they were left to make their way to land as best they might.

"Good luck to you!" shouted Jack. "If your king wants the Vixen, let him come and take it! With this message take also the defiance of Captain Jack Tempest, the free rover, the enemy of all tyrants, the friend of the helpless, the ally of the brave."

"Curse you!" cried Wildrake, rising in the boat and shaking his clenched fist at Jack. "The time will come, Jack Tempest, when I shall triumph, so look out for squalls."

"Them as comes from that quarter ain't to be feared," laughed Bob Gaskitt. "Now, boys, a cheer for our noble captain, and then to begin our cruise for glory."

CHAPTER XIV.

JACK'S RUSE SUCCEEDS TO A CHARM.

"There is only one thing which I regret, Hal," said Jack to his beloved lieutenant, a few weeks after the capture of the Vixen, "and that is that my name is not yet cleared up concerning that affair of the murder."

"Never fear, Jack, but that it will be some day. At present you cannot go back to clear the thing up, but I have no doubt that time will make all those things right."

"I trust that it will, Hal."

Both Jack and Harold were now dressed in splendid uniforms, all glittering with gold lace; Flossie being arrayed in a similar fashion, and making a most dashing young officer with her sword at her side, shining boots upon her lower limbs, a plumed chapeau upon her head, and her hair trimmed so that it just clustered in golden curls upon her white neck, the exigencies of the case demanding that for the present she should assume the dress and appearance of a man.

Jack had captured two or three small vessels engaged in piracy, and had thus obtained a considerable amount of money, with which he had dropped into an American port and made such purchases as were necessary and then skipped away again, not caring to lose any of his crew by desertion, knowing that after he had gained two or three victories they would be willing to stick to him, come what might.

Nothing had been seen of either Ironhand or Edna, but Jack had learned at the place where he had put in that the pirate was once more ravaging the coast and causing terror wherever he appeared.

After his escape he had doubtless joined his vessel, which had not been wrecked, like the Speedy, and was once more scouring the seas as of old.

Jack had set his heart upon ridding the seas of this man, and he was not the sort of boy to give up when he had once determined to do a thing; and as he was now surrounded by a crew of brave men, and had a fine ship at his disposal, the chances of his succeeding were better than ever before.

The name of the Vixen had been changed to the Avenger, this being not the only change in the vessel.

She had been improved in her sailing qualities, her cabins placed below decks so as not to present any impeding surface to the wind; and a fresh coat of paint, new brass and iron-work, more rakish topmasts and larger sails had been given to her, so that now she bore but a slight resemblance to her former self, and would hardly be recognized.

Jack was now cruising in the neighborhood of the Caribbee Islands—a famous resort for buccaneers—in the hope of meeting Ironhand or some other pirate, for everything was fish that came to his net now, and every fresh victory over the buccaneers added new laurels to his fame.

As he and Harold were seated in his luxuriously-appointed cabin discussing the matter of the murder of old Warden, as quoted at the beginning of the chapter, a sail was hailed from the masthead, and Jack sent his cabinboy to get the particulars.

The information which he brought back induced Jack to think that the newcomer was a pirate, not Ironhand himself, but his equal in cruelty, and preparations were at once made to receive him.

The portholes were masked, the guns on the spardeck covered with tarpaulins, and the general and warlike appearance of the Avenger so altered as to make her look like a lumbering merchantman, and not the saucy flyaway she really was.

"These fellows are getting shy of us," remarked Jack, "and we haven't been able to get within gunshot of one of their vessels lately. Seeing only a merchantman, this pirate will come flying down towards us, but let us once get a good chance to show our teeth, and he will speedily discover his mistake."

Half an hour later the newcomer, showing the black flag and all bristling with guns, was within hail of the Avenger, though as yet not a shot had been fired.

Only a sleepy-looking steersman and two slovenly fellows on the quarter-deck were to be seen on the vessel, and the pirates were very much puzzled.

But little sail was set, and the Avenger seemed scarcely to move, her whole appearance being that of a heavy, slow-going trader, richly laden perhaps, but not the sort of vessel from which any danger was to be apprehended.

"Ship ahoy!" roared the pirate captain. "Are you all dead, aboard there? Lower a boat and bring over your papers, or we'll sink you!"

"Reckon ye might's well come arter 'em," drawled Jack, from the quarter-deck, lazily rising and stretching himself. "We're shorthanded an' dassen't leave."

"Who are you, anyhow?"

"The Mary Eliza, from Boston, bound to Brazil. The fever got hold on us, and we-ain't got but three or four on us left. Don't you want to give us a tow? I'll make it worth your while. We've got silks and sich stuff, wuth nigh on to ten thousand Mexican dollars in hard gold."

"Oho! we'll relieve you," answered the pirate, with a coarse laugh. "Get ready a boat, there," he added, in a low tone to his lieutenant, "with a dozen good men in her, and do you go and look at this fellow's cargo."

The boat was lowered and pulled towards the supposed Mary Eliza, no other signs of life appearing upon her than had first been seen.

As the boat's crew leaped on deck, leaving one man to guard the craft, the lieutenant walking aft, a startling change suddenly took place.

Men sprang up from all sorts of odd corners, where before not a man had been seen, until there were two score of strong, hearty fellows surrounding the pirate.

The two lazy-looking lubbers on the quarter-deck threw off their long coats and changed to gorgeously-dressed young gentlemen with swords at their sides, while in a trice the tarpaulins were whipped off the guns, portholes were thrown open, sail made on every mast, and the listlessness which had before prevailed transformed to bustling activity.

"Treachery, by heavens!" cried the pirate lieutenant. "Who and what are you?"

"Captain Jack Tempest, at your service! Fire, my brave boys!"

The corsair chief, left aboard his own craft, had scarcely recovered from the surprise occasioned by the sudden transformation which he saw take place in the other vessel, when

a sheet of living flame burst from the portholes, and a shower of shot and shell burst upon his deck.

He quickly answered the broadside, but Jack had swung around so as to escape the worst of the fire, and in another instant had again poured in a frightful rain of deadly missiles upon the enemy.

Then the two vessels clashed together, but Jack swept the pirate's deck with a perfect tornado of fire and before long the doomed vessel was ablaze in many parts.

Then she was abandoned, and the prisoners hanged from the yardarm in sight of the blazing vessel, which continued to burn furiously until the flames, having reached the magazine, she blew up with a deafening report.

"That makes one less," muttered Jack, as his trim ship sailed rapidly away, "and such should be the fate of every pirate upon the sea, if I could have my way."

CHAPTER XV.

JACK SETS OUT TO REDRESS A WRONG AND MEETS AN OLD ENEMY.

After the adventure with the pirate, Jack determined to run his ship down to the Brazils in the hope of meeting other freebooters, or perhaps a slaver or two, regarding such fellows with the same abhorrence that he did pirates.

In little less than a week he spoke an American trading vessel, and as the latter seemed to be in distress, Jack had his boat lowered and went over to her.

"You are not English, I can see," said the captain, as Jack stepped aboard.

"No; and I have sworn vengeance against all the minions of the tyrant who now rules England."

"Then I wish that you had been here two days ago, for you might have prevented a dastardly outrage."

"What was it, pray?"

"An English man-of-war hailed and boarded us, and her captain took off six of my best men, claiming that they were British subjects. Four of them swore they were Americans, as I know them to be myself; but as for the others, I couldn't swear what they were."

"What was the name of the vessel?"

"The Royalty, of as many guns as yourself, and commanded by one Dashford. I forgot whether he has any other titles, but I'll swear that he is a villain."

"And this was two days since? Which way did she sail?"

"To the north of east, probably bound for the Bermudas."

"Well, if any of my men wish to go with you, I will spare you four or five, which will aid you considerably, and then I propose to go in search of this ruffian and take back the men he has kidnapped for my own use, if they really prove to be Americans."

"I trust that you will give the haughty fellow a lesson."

"I will, never fear. Now, if you will give me the names and description of these men I will lend you some to take their places, and then be off in search of this despoiler."

"You are really very obliging, Captain Tempest," for Jack had made himself known, "and I shall not be likely to soon forget your kindness."

Then he furnished the names and descriptions which Jack desired, after which our hero found six good fellows whom he could spare, and who were quite willing to go aboard the American ship, and then the two vessels parted company.

Two days later they made out an English-looking vessel on the port beam, which they presumed to be the Royalty.

Jack hoisted English colors, and signaled the other to

come down to her, which she did at once, showing the same colors as the Avenger.

"Is that the Royalty of his majesty's service?" called out Jack through his trumpet.

"It is. What is your vessel? I do not know you."

"The Intrepid, Lord George Beresford, K. C. B., commander. We are in want of men, and you must supply us. I will come over and make my selections."

"The deuce you will!" growled the commander of the Royalty, under his breath. "I don't like this sort of business at all; but if the fellow should prove to have a royal warrant to take such men as he likes, I am afraid that I shall have to submit."

"Hal, I want you to take charge of the vessel in my absence," said Jack, "and to be ready to stand by me in case of necessity. I don't know whether the papers which we have drawn up for such an occasion as this will pass muster, but I am going to risk it."

It was not the commander of the Royalty—Dashford himself—that had answered Jack's questions, but his chief lieutenant, the former having been standing at the door of the cabin, when he heard our hero's demand.

He now came out, however, as Jack was about to step into the boat, and Flossie uttered a sudden cry of alarm, and catching up a powerful glass, looked earnestly at him.

"Jack," she cried, seizing the young captain by the arm, "do you not see who the commander is—that man just coming on deck?"

"No. Why are you so agitated?"

"It is Roger Wildrake, your old enemy. Take the glass and see for yourself."

Jack did so, and but an instant sufficed to show that Flossie was right.

"Aha, this then is Dashford," said Jack. "The young reprobate has changed his name so as to get a ship, or perhaps he has stolen someone's papers. After his late disgrace, he could not possibly hope to secure a command under his own name."

"You must not go over to the ship!" cried Flossie. "You will be taken."

"What! Shrink from what I have undertaken, because my enemy chances to be aboard the vessel! No, no, it shall never be said that Jack Tempest retreated for any such cause."

"But you will be detected."

"Not so;" and in point of fact, Jack, with his full powdered wig, gorgeous uniform, high white cravat, and a profusion of lace, looked as little like himself as could well be imagined.

"Forewarned is forearmed," he said, quietly, and then gliding down the ladder, he took his place in the boat and was pulled over to the Royalty by eight sturdy fellows arrayed as British tars.

"Captain Dashford?" he asked, stiffly, and in a shrill, rasping voice, keeping a perfumed handkerchief to his nose and half shutting his eyes.

"The same, Lord Beresford, at your service."

The speaker was none other than Wildrake.

How he had managed to get command of the Royalty, Jack of course could not tell, but that it was only by cheat and trickery he was well convinced.

"Ah! not the Dashford I supposed," croaked Jack. "Quite another fellah, begad. Show me your sailors, Dashford, me boy, and I will make my pick."

Wildrake bit his lip with vexation, and muttered to himself:

"Confound the effrontery of this old fool! I am afraid he

suspects something, and I dare not provoke him too far. Not the Dashford he supposed? No, indeed! I warrant it isn't."

"Well, my fine fellow, are you ever going to give your orders?" demanded Jack, sharply.

"All hands aft!" called out the lieutenant, and as the men came up Jack had no difficulty in recognizing among them four Americans, probably the very ones taken from the merchantman.

CHAPTER XVI.

ASSURANCE GAINS THE DAY.

"What is your name, my man?" asked Jack, addressing one of the Americans.

"Jefferson, your lordship, but I'm not an English subject, and was taken from an American vessel about a week ago. They had no right to take me."

"H'm!" croaked Jack. "Name of ship?"

"The Potomac, Captain Townsend," answered the man, those being the names of the vessel and captain, as Jack well knew, and the man's name of Jefferson was also down upon his list.

"Ah, yes, that's a fine story," returned Jack. "You can step out, my man; I want you."

"But I tell you that I am an American. You will repent this outrage, sir, sooner or later."

"Ah, yes, no doubt, but I haven't time to argue the point. This man suits me very well, Dashford, and we'll call him one. What is your name, my man?" he continued, addressing another unmistakable American.

"Williams and I was taken from the Potomac, too. You have no right to impress me."

"Ah, you're a British subject, you know, and his majesty does what he likes with his subjects—the more shame to him!" he added, beneath his breath. "Step aside, my man."

The fellow protested, but he was forced to step out, and then Jack went through his entire list and picked out every man that had been taken from the American trader, besides three or four whom he strongly suspected of never having been British subjects, which, indeed, they were not.

"But, my lord, you will strip me of all my best men," protested Wildrake, who witnessed, with consternation, this wholesale reduction of his crew.

"Ah, Dashford, my boy," said Jack, with a provoking smile, "it cawn't be helped, ye know. Boatswain," to honest Bob Gaskitt, "show these fellows to the boat."

"I don't believe you have any right to rob me in this high-handed manner. I don't believe you are Lord Beresford at all. Where is your authority? I demand to see it."

"You're an impertinent fellow," squeaked Jack, taking snuff. "You call yourself Dashford, indeed! Where did you get the name? Egad, I know Captain Chawles very well."

Wildrake turned livid and began to tremble.

"Egad, if there is an impostor here," snapped Jack, clapping his hand on his sword, "I can easily tell who it is. You were called Wildrake the last time I saw you, and you allowed the Vixen to be taken from you by that young daredevil, Jack Tempest!"

The officers began to look from one to the other of the speakers, and to regard Wildrake with glances of scorn.

"Egad, I knew you weren't Dashford the instant I saw you," continued Jack. "He was a gentleman," with bitter emphasis, "but you—Egad, Mr. Wildrake, I'll thank you to show me your papers, for I'll wager you stole them, and did this poor fellow an ill turn. I know you, scoundrel as you are, and I have a mind, egad, to take you into port. Dispute my authority indeed! Was there ever such impertinence!"

By this time Bob had got the men all into the boat, and stood ready to cast off.

"Show me your authority!" hissed Wildrake, almost beside himself with rage.

"Lieutenant," said Jack, calmly, turning to Wildrake's chief officer, "Mr. Wildrake is under arrest. I place you in command. Hark, ye, sir," to Roger. "I've a mind to take you aboard my own vessel and have you hanged for insubordination. I will take care that you are reported at the first station I make. Lieutenant, take his sword."

Suddenly Wildrake caught sight of Jack's scarred hand, which the latter had been careful to conceal until then.

At once he cried out:

"By heaven, it is Jack Tempest, the pirate, and yonder is my own vessel, the Vixen! We have been tricked. Lieutenant, this is an outrage. This man is a fraud—a humbug. He is no more Lord Beresford than I am."

"Captain Dashford," added Jack, giving an ending to his sentence which Wildrake had not intended, and preserving the most wonderful of self-command. "Here is my authority, Captain," handing some papers to the officer, "and I place you in command of the Royalty, and charge you to proceed at once to such place as will afford you an opportunity to investigate this affair more fully."

"The papers are perfectly regular," answered the officer, glancing over them. "Captain Dashford—Wildrake, I should say—your sword. My lord, I am pleased to be able to thank you for this proof of your confidence in me."

"If you want my sword, pick it up!" hissed Roger, throwing the blade upon deck in a perfect fury. "I protest against this outrage. That man is Jack Tempest, the pirate, though till now I did not see through his disguise. I will prove to you that he is an impostor."

He flew at Jack for the purpose of tearing off his powdered wig and false hair, but two under officers, at the new captain's signal, prevented him, and held him back.

"Put the mutineer in irons," roared the other.

"The toady!" thought Jack. "How he is taken by a title and a little flattery. I could not have had a better ally, for his love of rank will bend him to my will."

"I must go aboard my own ship, Captain," said Jack, aloud, as Wildrake was dragged away, foaming at the mouth. "I have no fear but that you will prove a better commander than this fellow. Egad! he let this very Jack Tempest, that he calls me, get his ship away from him, and set him and his officers afloat. Egad! d'ye think such a fellow can get a ship whenever he wants one? By my veracity, I'll be foresworn if he didn't come dishonestly by the papers and name of Captain Dashford!"

This little bit of effrontery took immensely with the new captain, who was utterly dazzled by the idea of being put in command, and he would have given up half of his men if Jack had asked him for them.

As there were no more Americans, Jack did not want them, and so, bidding adieu to the captain of the Royalty in a most stilted manner, he pressed upon him his gold snuffbox and departed over the side, and was soon standing on the deck of his own ship.

"A narrow escape, by Jove!" he muttered, descending into the cabin to get rid of his disguise. "Crowd on all sail, Harold, my lad, and get away from here. When our friend empties the snuffbox I gave him he'll know more than he does now."

The new captain did that very shortly, having no taste whatever for the stuff, but only desiring the box, which was a very handsome one.

As Jack and his brave lads sped away, their vessel sinking lower and lower on the horizon, he emptied the snuff over

to leeward and then caught sight of a paper fastened in the bottom, on which was written:

"You are a fool!

"Yours with respect,

"JACK TEMPEST.

"What sort of a lord do I make?

JACK."

Then he knew the trick that had been played upon him, but he was in command, and continued to be, professing the utmost disbelief of Wildrake's statements regarding Jack, with which the latter regarded him.

Jack Tempest was too far away to be caught now, however, and the man wisely kept his chagrin to himself.

CHAPTER XVII.

TO THE RESCUE.

"Now for adventure. I have had my revenge!" cried Jack, as the gallant ship flew over the waters.

Straight down into the broad Atlantic they flew, leaving all pursuers behind, and all was merriment on board the Avenger.

At last they crossed the line, and shortly after doing so a cry was heard from the masthead.

"A strange craft just under our lee bow, sir. They're coming aboard."

Hardly had the words died away, when over the bow of the ship clambered a dozen strange-looking figures.

The foremost was an old man, half naked and fantastically dressed, with long white hair and beard, a gold crown on his head, a green cloak depending from his broad shoulders, and a skirt of sea-weed girded about his loins.

He carried a huge trident in his right hand, and on his left arm hung a female with long black hair entwined with seaweed hanging down her back, a short red skirt, reaching to the knee, sandals on her bare and very big feet, numerous brass rings on her arms, huge rings in her ears, and a gilt crown on her head.

Behind this pair came nearly a dozen odd-looking creatures, male and female, half human, half fish, who marched in twos, the whole party making the round of the deck.

"Father Neptune and his wife and family, I believe?" said Jack, saluting the head of the odd procession.

"The same," answered old Nep, in a gruff voice, which sounded strangely enough like Bob Gaskitt's, despite the strange sound given to it by being propelled through an immense and very red nose. "I have the pleasure of addressing Captain Jack Tempest, and of welcoming him to my watery domains?"

"I am Captain Jack Tempest."

"I have heard tell of you, but never had the pleasure of seeing you. This is my old woman, Mrs. Nep, and these likely critters are my children. Most of your crew is strange to us, Cap'n Jack Tempest."

"I believe so."

"Then we'll initiate 'em, with your kind permission."

"You may; let the sports proceed."

"There's a queer-lookin' sailor yonder," said Neptune, catching sight of Master Tim. "I'll swear I don't know him. Fetch him up to see me."

The king of the ocean sat himself down on a throne covered with tarpaulins, which his children had suddenly improvised, his queen sitting by his side, and then Master Timothy was led up to be presented.

"Really, this honor is non sequitur and quite a *lex talionis* proceeding," roared the little limb of the law in his pompous way. "Neptune, as I may say, is the supreme judge of this district, the sanctum sanctorum of the bench. I have the honor to make your acquaintance, sir."

"Sit down!" bellowed Neptune, who seemed very much affected by this speech, and Master Tim was forced to take a seat, while the royal barber and his assistants proceeded to pay him certain delicate attentions.

They lathered him with slush, they scraped him with a bit of hoop-iron, they made his hair all stand up with tar, and when this was over, suddenly knocked him over backwards into a huge cask of water, where he floundered about like a very odd fish, until some of the imps pulled him out, and laid him across a hatch to dry.

"By my legal standing but this is most ungentlemanly, most unscholarly treatment!" sputtered the queer fellow, gasping for breath. "I shall bring a suit in *corpore sano* against all who have taken part, *nolens volens* or otherwise, in this *ad infinitum* proceeding! I shall, so help me Phadamanthus!"

Master Timothy, puffing and blowing like a porpoise, and threatening all sorts of lawsuits against his tormentors, suddenly felt his legs knocked from under him.

Somebody had deftly fastened a hook into his belt behind, and at the word of command the jokers hauled away upon the fall.

Away went Master Tim's legs, and there he was in a posture of swimming, held in midair by the waist, kicking, striking out, and bellowing like a bull to be let down.

"It's an outrage, an *ipse dixit*, a perfect *similia similibus* curantur. Let me down, I command," he roared out, getting his Latin quotations very much mixed, and looking for all the world like a great turtle as he kicked and splurged.

He was let down, indeed, but not as he would have liked, for, the hook being suddenly unfastened, splash! into the hogshead he went over head and ears.

Suddenly the boatswain's pipe was heard and the maskers suddenly decamped, the deck was put in order once more, the luckless Tim was taken out of his bath and put between two hot blankets, and the regular routine went on as before, the men working with all the more zest for the little sport they had been allowed to indulge in.

The next event which we shall chronicle of our hero took place shortly after his arrival off the Brazilian coast, where he fell in with one of the emperor's war vessels in close contact with two Dutchmen of superior force.

"The time has passed by," he cried, impetuously, "when every Hollander carries a broom at his prow. No longer shall they sweep the seas. Boatswain, pipe all hands. Drummers, beat to quarters. Clear the deck for action."

"Are you going to take a hand in this fight?" asked Harold.

"Aye! Do you not see that it is two to one. The Brazilians have always been our friends, and I mean to show these proud Dutchmen what a brave boy can do."

"If we make them run, verily we shall see the 'Flying Dutchman,' and yet not perish," remarked Master Timothy, dryly. "Reduction ad absurdum," as the poet hath it."

On board Jack's vessel all was bustle and action. No confusion, no hurry, only discipline, although excitement was the order of the day.

Jack hoisted the green flag with the royal arms emblazoned in the center, the sight of which caused a thrill of excitement in the hearts of those on board the Brazilian.

This might be a ruse, however, in order to allow some new enemy to approach, and for a moment there was a doubt as to the newcomer's identity.

This was presently cleared completely away by a shot from the Avenger, which carried away a topmast from one of the Dutchmen, followed by another, which burst through the bulwarks of her companion and killed half a dozen men.

The effect of these two shots was most electrical.

The drooping spirits of the Brazilians were at once revived, and they rallied to the conflict with renewed zeal.

Then the Avenger drew closer, and Jack poured in such a broadside upon the nearer of the two Dutch ships as to cause the utmost consternation.

Her bowsprit, with its boastful broom, was carried away; huge rents were made in her big, clumsy sails; her mainmast was so shattered that it seemed about to fall at any moment, and in her hull were great chasms, through which the water rushed in a fearful flood.

"Ha! ha! we'll make a Dutch cheese of her," laughed brave Bob Gaskitt, "and she'll sink like a stone presently."

"Give her another!" cried Jack.

Then, as the Avenger rushed forward, a deadly rain was poured upon the Dutchman, which, disabled and riddled, sinking and crippled, now drew quickly out of the fight and hauled down her flag.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JACK JOINS THE BRAZILIANS.

A tremendous cheer went up from the crew of the Avenger, and then leaping upon the poop, Jack sang out at the top of his voice:

"Now to board the other one! Look alive, my brave boys, and let our cry be victory!"

"Victory!" cried all the brave fellows in chorus.

The withdrawal of the vanished Dutchman had left the other between two fires, and Jack now strained every nerve to be the first to board the enemy.

The Avenger crowded on all the sail she could carry, and bore down upon her foe with the literal speed of the wind.

The Brazilian was nearer, and was now throwing shot after shot into her adversary, her men cheering lustily as the dreadful missiles went bursting through the air.

Seeing the Avenger approaching, she reserved her fire so as not to harm her friend by an unlucky shot, and then both vessels bore down upon the unlucky Dutchman, like two huge jaws closing upon one unhappy victim.

The disabled vessel, evidently considering that she had more than her share of the combat, and preferring flight to capture, her commander at once put about and sailed away with all the speed he might, leaving his comrade to get out of his scrape the best way he could.

Jack laughed, and bade Bob send a shot from the Long Tom after the escaping Dutchman, just for luck.

"He'll see that it don't pay to be the 'Flying Dutchman' after all," muttered the brave tar as he sighted his piece and fired.

Boom!

Crash!

Splash!

The heavy shot struck the already disabled mainmast square in the center.

There was a sound of crashing, splintering timbers, and then, with a loud report, the mast split in twain.

Crash over into the sea it went with a loud splashing, the spray being dashed high into the air and over the decks of the vessel.

The captain had endeavored to stop the leaks in her side

temporarily by putting canvas over them, but a shot from the Brazilian tore away this makeshift, and the water poured in faster than ever.

The attention of both vessels was now drawn to the remaining Dutchman, and if there was any chance of the other escaping, he was at perfect liberty to make the most of it.

Jack's ship had more speed than the Brazilian, and notwithstanding the great distance, he was the first to reach the enemy and run alongside.

As the two ships came together, grappling-hooks were thrown out by Jack's men, and the vessels securely fastened, one to another.

"Victory!" cried Jack, waving his sword. "Follow me, hearts of steel!"

Like a torrent the brave boys poured upon the decks of the enemy's ship; Jack, Harold and Flossie at their head, Bob Gaskitt, Trumper and Spanker following close behind.

Like a swarm of angry bees the lads of the Avenger swept the decks of the Dutchman, and a fierce combat at once took place.

Jack, Harold and Flossie stood with their backs together, and around this human triangle, as a center, swept a circle of fierce foes, every one of whom aimed savage blows at the three brave souls opposed to them.

Man after man was cut down by the three comrades; but the circle was narrowing about them, and death stared them in the face.

Suddenly Bob Gaskitt, with half a dozen hardy sailors at his back, broke through the circle, and scattered their foes right and left.

By this time the Brazilian had come up, and a new force came pouring upon the deck of the doomed vessel.

Jack's men were easily distinguished from the enemy, so that there was no danger of their being mistaken for the latter—a mistake which might have ended disastrously.

Suddenly the Dutchman's colors came fluttering down on deck, the halyards sustaining them having been cut, and a joyful shout went up from both crews at this sign of submission.

Seeing that all was over, the Dutch captain advanced and surrendered his sword to Jack, when the tumult became fairly deafening.

"Hurray!" shouted honest Bob. "Another victory for Captain Jack Tempest!"

After this little ebullition of feeling on the part of Jack's crew, the Brazilian captain advanced and addressed our hero in Portuguese, Jack replying in French, that being the language which he thought most likely to be comprehensible to the captain, after his own.

The officer was evidently surprised, and understanding French, made reply in that language as follows:

"You are not a Brazilian then, Captain?"

"No, monsieur, I am not. I am an American, by which, of course, I mean that I am from the North, though really you are as much an American as myself."

"But you came to my aid——"

"Because Brazil has always been friendly to us, because there were two against you, because I wished, if possible, to distinguish myself."

You have done so, monsieur, beyond a doubt. What disposition do you intend making of this ship? As you were the first to board it, to you belongs the glory."

"If it were yours, where would you take it?"

"To Rio Janeiro."

"Then we will go thither in company, as I wish to offer my services to your emperor. Will you do me the favor to step into my cabin? I should like to talk with you privately."

Meanwhile boats had been sent out to pick up the crew

of the sinking Dutch vessel, the prisoners on board were sent below, and the captain placed under guard in his own cabin.

In the cabin of the Avenger Jack related his adventures briefly, adding that, as he was simply looking for fame at present, he would be glad of allying himself to any friendly power in order to attain that end.

When he spoke of pirates, the Brazilian became interested, and when Jack had finished, he said, excitedly:

"There are other pirates, which it is the duty of all civilized nations to exterminate. I allude to slavers—those outlaws of society that prey on the lives of their fellow-creatures."

"And slavery is not yet abolished in Brazil."

"The trade is looked down upon, however, and efforts are making to have it broken up, although there will probably be slaves in Brazil for some time to come. We wish that no more should be brought here; that is the point."

"I am as eager as you, sir, to put down the infernal traffic."

"Good. Shortly before our fight with these Dutchmen, a vessel which I am confident is a slaver, passed us, bound to the southeast."

"We must pursue and capture the miscreant."

Arrangements were at once made for the chase, and the three vessels at once set sail in company, a crew made up of men from the other two being put on the Dutchman, a Brazilian lieutenant taking command.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SLAVER.

"Sail—ho!"

This cry came from the man at the masthead on board the Avenger, a few hours after the events just related.

Jack's vessel had taken the lead, the others being three or four miles behind.

"What do you make her out to be?" asked Jack, coming on deck as the man's hail rang out.

"A brig, sir, and a fast sailer at that. Her bows are as sharp as a needle, and her sails give her the utmost speed."

"Do you think she is a slaver?"

"She is either that or a pirate."

"Clap on all sail and wet 'em down. Run up Brazilian colors. Get ready for action."

Jack's orders were obeyed, and the Avenger presently increased her speed and drew close to the fugitive, the latter evidently trying to escape.

She showed no colors, but crowded on all the sail she could stand up under, and tacked so as to get the wind at the greatest advantage.

Jack's ship was not to be outrun by her, however, and as the time flew by the distance between pursuer and pursued steadily diminished.

The sun was getting low, and this was the only chance left to the stranger, for once night had fallen he might possibly escape.

Old Bob Gaskitt took the glass and scanned the other vessel narrowly, breaking out at last with a grunt, and an exclamation of great satisfaction.

"If that fellow hasn't got a lot of niggers on board, I'll chew oakum for the rest of my natural days."

"Signal her to lay to and wait for us," said Jack; and the signal flags were run up, the stranger not only paying no attention to them, but doing her best to get away.

"Give her a shot, Bob."

The honest fellow let fly, and so well aimed was the shot that it struck the taffrail and carried away a part of the wheelhouse.

The stranger answered with another, which fell far short of its mark.

"What's that?" cried Harold, suddenly pointing ahead of them from his position on the quarter-deck, whence he could the better see what took place. "They have thrown something overboard."

Jack seized a glass and turned his gaze toward the stranger.

"The water is agitated. I can see foam dashing up—yes, by heavens, there are sharks, too, and a horrible feast is theirs! The monster is throwing his cargo overboard!"

Bob Gaskitt sprang into the rigging, glass in hand.

"You're right, sir," he presently shouted. "That human devil is tumbling the poor wretches over. Some are shotted and sink, but more have been gobbled up by the sharks."

"He's lightening his ship," called out Spanker, "so as to go the faster, and have no tell-tale signs if we should happen to come up with him."

"Send a shot through his hull, Bob, before he drowns any more of those poor wretches."

"Aye, aye, sir! That's a job that pleases me better than any."

All this time the Avenger had been drawing closer, and every movement upon the stranger's decks could now be seen without the aid of the glass.

Moreover, they had come upon certain floating bodies, the very sight of which made the blood run cold.

These were the mutilated corpses of black men upon which the greedy sharks were still feasting.

There was now no doubt in Jack's mind as to the character of the man he was pursuing.

On the slaver's decks the utmost confusion reigned, men running to and fro, the captain on the quarter-deck issuing hurried orders, blacks swarming from the hold despite the efforts of the crew to beat them down, and everything in a hubbub.

"The blackies will get the best of the rascals," yelled Spanker.

"Give 'em blazes, Bob."

Bob had loaded the long swivel-gun, and he now clapped a hot coal on the vent and jumped back.

Boom!

The huge missile struck the hull of the slaver below the water-line, dashing up the spray and burying itself deep into the wood.

"Good! That shot told. Give her a broadside. It were no sin to sink a villain like that without mercy."

Boom!

Boom!

The men flew to the guns, and a column of fire presently shot forth from the Avenger's side, the vessel shaking under the fierce shock.

When the smoke of the broadside had cleared away, the slaver was seen making every effort to escape.

They were now beset by two dangers.

The water was rushing in at the side, the foremast had been shot away, and the headsails being useless, capture was almost certain.

On the other hand, the poor slaves in the hold had overpowered the men at the hatchways and were coming on deck in swarms, threatening to kill every white man on board.

"We shall have all we can do to take care of that dusky horde," mused Jack. "It were madness to attempt to save them. They must be abandoned."

The slaver captain, with three of his officers, stood on the quarter-deck fighting off the swarming blacks, while close behind the captain himself stood a white woman, the utmost terror depicted on her face.

The sailors were being rapidly cut down by the infuriated blacks, and now the latter pressed hard upon the small band of whites standing aft.

"Complete your work and sink us!" yelled the slaver captain, turning towards Jack. "Be merciful, and save us from these fiends!"

"Have pity!" shrieked the white woman, turning appealingly to Jack as the Avenger came rapidly on, her bowsprit promising to sweep over the slavers' quarter.

"Lay out there!" cried Jack, "and save the woman. She looks too pure to meet such a fate."

Bob Gaskitt was astride the boom and down on the martingale in two minutes, just as the bow of the Avenger swept across the slaver's after-deck.

To cling with one arm and seize the woman with the other and draw her towards him, was the work of an instant.

Spanker had run along the boom after his comrade, and he now took the woman from Bob as the Avenger's cutwater struck the hull of the slaver and cut through like a knife.

The slaver captain was at that moment surrounded and cut down by a score of blacks, and the next moment the deck was slimy with blood.

One of the slaver's crew, a mere boy, seized hold of a stay as the ship swept on, and drew himself on board.

Then the Avenger passed on, the slaver's quarter being cut in two, and the water rushing in like a flood.

As Jack looked back, he saw her sink beneath the waves with all her poor captives.

"Better death than captivity," murmured the young commander. "The alternative was dreadful, but I could not sacrifice all our lives by attempting to rescue the poor wretches. The affair has turned out otherwise than I expected, but who can blame me?"

The other vessels as they came up, however, succeeded in rescuing a score or two of the blacks, though the number that had perished more than quadrupled the number saved.

As the Avenger dashed on, the sun sank red and fiery into the sea, while darkness soon fell over all the ocean like a pall, as if to hide the awful scenes that had but so lately been enacted.

"So perish the innocent with the guilty, over all the world," mused Jack. "It is fate, and no one can gainsay it."

CHAPTER XX.

HAROLD MEETS HIS FATE.

"Will you see the lady and the boy, our new guests, Jack?"

It was Harold who put this query to the young captain the day succeeding the fight with the slaver.

"Yes; where are they?"

"They are waiting your pleasure in the outer cabin. Shall I bring them in here?"

Jack answered affirmatively, and in a few moments Harold returned with the young lady that had been rescued from the slave-ship, together with the lad, the latter having served as cabin-boy aboard the doomed vessel.

The girl was surpassingly beautiful, and Harold felt a slight quiver at his heart as he gazed upon her charming features and noticed the perfect outlines of her figure.

"A pleasant morning to you, my brave preserver," said the lady, in French.

"I am pleased to see you," replied Jack, in the same language, gazing with admiration upon the speaker, and feeling that, were it not for Flossie, he could easily fall in love with the beautiful girl before him, "and grateful that I have been enabled to do you a service."

"Then the feeling of gratitude is mutual," returned the lady, in the sweetest of tones, "for I know not to what dreadful fate I should have been doomed by that monster had you not destroyed him."

"He would not surely sell you as a slave?" cried Jack, indignantly.

"He would have kept me as one, for he swore, with all the fierce oaths he could invent, that I should be his bride. I am a Spanish lady of noble blood, and the thought that I must be allied to this wretch was maddening."

"He tore you from your home?"

"Alas, I have no home now; all is gone from me—home, friends, everything."

"Will you not tell me your sad story?" asked Harold.

The lady did not understand English, but the boy repeated the question in Spanish, and the girl, blushing, answered, speaking to Jack, but looking at Harold:

"Not long ago I embarked with my father on board his ship bound for the African colonies, where he went to retrieve his fallen fortunes."

"We fell in with the slaver, and the wretch attacked and destroyed our ship, taking me captive, destroying all the sailors and seizing all our valuables."

"My father had been killed in the fight, so that he was spared the agony of witnessing my degradation, of hearing from his own lips the base proposals of this monster."

"We had known him before, and he had sued for my hand, but had been refused with scorn and contempt, and threatened with death if he ever came near me again, for he was suspected even then of being an outlaw and a pirate."

"His revenge was dreadful, and I know not what might have happened had you not arrived as you did, and put an end to his villainous career. Oh, those poor blacks! I do not wonder that they wished to kill their tormentors, for their life on board was one long, living hell."

"If I agreed to be this villain's wife, he promised to load me with riches, to anticipate my slightest wish; I should have a hundred slaves to attend on me; I should reign like a queen over my devoted subjects; nothing that I coveted should be withheld from me."

"If I refused I was to be worse than his slave, and in misery and degradation would I wear away my life. Oh, I dread to think of the horrible fate in store for me, for his wife I never would be; rather would I end my life by my own hand!"

"And you have saved me," she concluded, bestowing a beaming smile upon our hero. "How can I thank you sufficiently? But, alas! what is there to live for now?"

"There is a chance for you, Hal," said Jack, in English, "for I see that you have already fallen in love with this peerless beauty."

"What does she say?" asked Harold, blushing. "Tell her I love her with all my heart, and will make her my wife as soon as we reach Rio Janeiro, or any place where we can find a priest. I suppose they don't have ministers in these parts?"

"What says he?" asked the lady of Jack, the boy whom she had questioned remaining discreetly silent.

"He loves you, and pities your sad lot. He will make you his wife. He is a noble fellow, and has a heart of gold. Titles and rank are not his, but he can give you a life's devotion, and you can trust him as you would the sun. He is my friend, and he would give up his life for those he loved."

The beautiful girl turned towards Harold and regarded him with a look of interest, the while the youth stood half embarrassed, not understanding what was said, and yet seeming to feel that he was the subject under discussion.

"What does she say, Jack?" he asked, pressing forward

and seizing the beautiful creature's hand. "Will she be mine?"

His eyes spoke a language which the girl understood, if his tongue did not, and, returning the pressure of his hand, she allowed herself to be embraced without resistance.

"My own, my sweet," murmured Harold, gazing lovingly into her eyes and finding happiness in their liquid depths, "till now I have not known what love is. What need have we of a common language, since we understand each other so well?"

Jack smiled, and said quietly:

"The little cabin-boy will be your interpreter, Hal, for he is discretion itself, and will repeat nothing. However, I would advise you to study my French grammar and dictionary, for you will grow tired of exchanging nothing but looks after awhile."

The study of a language other than that of love went on rapidly, and before long Harold not only spoke French fairly, but Isabel—as the rescued maiden was called—could converse with him in English.

After punishing the slaver, Jack proceeded to Rio and offered his services to the Brazilian government in protecting their commerce against foreign marauders, and the offer was accepted gratefully.

For many months Jack cruised up and down the Brazilian coast, engaging with many vessels, and either destroying or forcing them all to retreat, enriching his own coffers as well as those of the emperor in the meantime.

However, before setting sail from Rio, an important ceremony had taken place, which was no less than the marriage of the young adventurer to Flossie Fairleigh and of Harold Storms to Isabel da Ramez, both marriages receiving the sanction and the blessing of the emperor himself.

It was considered best for our heroes to leave their wives on shore, as there was too much danger for them on sea, and Flossie now donned her appropriate costume, looking as charming in her white robes as she had looked gallant in her dashing naval uniform.

For several months Jack cruised up and down in the Atlantic, and at last found himself irresistibly drawn to other fields of adventure.

Putting in at Rio, he claimed a respite for some months, and, taking Flossie aboard, set sail for the boundless Pacific in quest of fame and fortune.

It is needless to say that Flossie did not go without her companion, and the cabins of Jack and Harold were fitted with the utmost comfort and elegance on the wives' account.

"For fame and fortune!" cried Jack, standing on the poop as his vessel swept out of the harbor amid the cheers of the populace, the booming of cannon, and the waving of a thousand flags and streamers.

"Farewell, brave boy!" cried the multitude, "and may fame and fortune be thine in all abundance."

Once in the Pacific Jack began to look for pirates, those ancient enemies of his, but he did not fall in with any until near the Gullapagos Islands, which formerly were famed for the resort of lawless characters of all kinds, and here one day he saw a suspicious sail, which Bob Gaskitt swore could be only a buccaneer.

CHAPTER XXI.

TWO OLD ACQUAINTANCES.

"Show the stars and stripes, and run down to this fellow," cried Jack, when Bob Gaskitt made his report. "I am grow-

ing rusty for want of exercise, and would much like to try a brush with some of my ancient foes."

As the starry flag unrolled its folds at the peak, the stranger displayed his own ensign, the black flag with the skull and cross-bones in silver upon its sable field.

Then just below this another flag was displayed, which told Jack who his enemy was.

This was a blood-red banner, emblazoned with a hand in armor raised in a threatening attitude.

"Ironhand!" muttered the boy. "So, he and I shall meet again."

"There goes another one," cried out Bob Gaskitt, as a third ball of bunting was seen ascending to the peak.

It unfolded and displayed a square, yellow and gold flag, with a crowned tigress crouching upon its surface.

"That is Edna's flag," said Harold. "The Witch of the Waves sails in company with Ironhand. It is not often that two such fierce creatures are found on one ship."

"No, it is two of a kind," said Jack, quickly; "there are two vessels yonder instead of one."

This now proved to be the case, and both vessels were distinctly visible, having drawn apart in the last few moments.

"So then there are two enemies instead of one to conquer," murmured Jack. "If only that villain Wildrake would now appear I should be satisfied."

"Both of yonder vessels are good fighters and fast sailers, if looks go for anything," spoke up Ned Spanker, "and our young commander will have a fistfull, I'm thinking, when he grapples with 'em."

"But his fist is a good hard one, friend Ned," answered Bob, "and whatever he catches hold of he clings to, let me tell you."

"Look alive, there, forward!" called out Harold, at this moment. "All hands ahoy! Clear the decks for action!"

Powder and shot were brought up from below, arms were distributed, the topsails lowered, guns unlimbered, portholes opened, and preparations for battle made with great rapidity.

The Avenger drew nearer to her opponents; but not one of the three vessels fired a shot until they were in hail of one another.

"Is it you, Ivan Ironhand, that again falls within my power?" thundered Jack, through his trumpet.

"Aye, it is Ironhand, indeed; but it is you that will yield to me. The peerless Floss shall be my bride, and you shall be the slave of the Witch of the Waves."

"Cease your boastings, miserable recreant, for your hour has come! I have sworn to rid the seas of all such vermin as you, and I will keep my word!"

"Bah! the burning embers of your ship shall light me to fresh conquests. Your men shall walk the plank; your sweetheart repose in my arms, and you—you shall pass the rest of your life in the worst drudgery that your proud mistress shall invent."

"Yield to me now, rash boy," cried Edna, from the quarter-deck of her vessel, where she stood arrayed in sumptuous magnificence, "and a life of ease shall be yours. Resist, and a miserable fate shall be yours."

"Take my answer, both of you!" cried Jack, scornfully. "It is not for me, but for you, to listen to terms."

Then turning to Harold, he clapped his hands and drew his glittering, gold-hilted sword from its scabbard.

"Fire!"

It was Harold who gave the order, as he leaped to the deck and hurried among the gunners.

Boom!

Boom!

The vessel shook throughout her entire length, and a fierce broadside swept over Ironhand's ship.

Quickly tacking, the Avenger poured in the fire from the port guns, and then swinging around, ran full tilt at Ironhand.

"Fire!"

Both pirates discharged their guns at once, but the brave Avenger swept on unharmed.

"Stand by to board her," yelled Jack. "Let the fight be sharp and short, my brave hearts!"

"Aye—aye!" came from a hundred throats.

"And remember, spare not one, not even Ironhand himself."

"No, not one."

Well might Ironhand tremble as he heard those words, and call on his men to defend their lives with their last breath.

Boom!

Boom!

A perfect shower of fire falls upon his vessel from the Avenger, and she bursts into flames in a dozen places.

Again and again that fiery rain falls upon her, and as she is wrapped in fire from stem to stern, the sharp prow of the Avenger crashes into her hull amidships, and the water pours in like a flood.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CHASE.

Ironhand has not been idle, but Jack's attack has been so sudden and of so terrible and unexpected a nature that all he can now do will avail him nothing.

It is not solid shot that fall upon his vessels, but masses of living fire, which consume everything that they touch.

The secret is Jack's, he having learned it of an old chemist in Rio, and a terrible one it is.

Though Ironhand has fired round after round at the Avenger, her armored sides have repelled all the shocks against them, and scarcely a spar is injured.

As her sharp prow pierces the side of the pirate vessel the water rushes in, and below, on the gundeck, through the gap Jack has made, can be seen terrified men running to and fro to escape the threatened danger.

Reversing his wheel, Jack allows the ship to fall off so as not to be entangled in the sinking, burning wreck of the Corsair.

In vain Ironhand's men attempt to put out the fire; it eats through the decks and falls below like molten lead, consuming whatever it strikes.

The masts crumble away like twigs in a furnace, the shrouds twist and snap under the fierce heat, the sails and halyards burn like punk, and the tar fairly boils in the vessel's seams.

The Avenger draws off, and a lusty shout goes up from her decks as Ironhand's helpless craft loses her headway and defies all control; the hull sinks lower in the water, the flames now breaking out below deck and wrapping the doomed ship in a mantle of fire.

It had never been Jack's intention to board the pirate, his order being given merely to blind Ironhand and take his attention off his own vessel for a time.

"Look, look!" cries Harold; "the flames grow fiercer, the smoke is denser. The fire must be near the magazine."

Boom!

It is lucky that the Avenger has withdrawn to a safe distance from her enemy.

What means that awful clamor that now arises?

Ha! there comes a dense cloud of sulphurous smoke, mingled with a fiery column that seems to reach to the very heavens.

The sulphurous cloud spreads far and wide, and for some moments the surface of the sea is hidden for quite a distance.

When it clears away there are but two vessels in sight—that commanded by Jack Tempest and that of the pirate queen.

Ironhand's ship has perished, and with it the buccaneer and all his crew.

"Now for the other; you will destroy that as well, won't you?" asks Harold.

"Not in the same way. I used up all of my peculiar ammunition on Ironhand, for whom I saved it."

"But you have other kinds?"

"Yes; but no more of that; and you will find that our stock of guns will need replenishing, for this stuff has burned them out. It is a costly weapon, but a deadly one."

The guns were most of them well-nigh useless, in fact, for the material that had been used had developed such great heat as to nearly melt them.

As Jack had said, his weapon was a costly one, for he had paid the chemist who had supplied him a thousand pounds in gold for enough for half a dozen broadsides, and the guns were unfit for further service.

However, Jack had foreseen all this, and there were new pieces in the hold to take the places of those that had been used up.

The pirate queen, disheartened apparently at the terrible destruction of Ironhand and his vessel and crew, had made all haste from the fatal spot, and her ship was now far to leeward, making for one of the small islands at the southeastern extremity of the Gallapagos group.

"She may lead us a chase, but I intend to follow her up," cried Jack. "Hal, my lad, crowd on all sail, and tell Bob to get out the good guns, and break these up for shot. We'll give her ladyship a raking when we catch up to her."

The necessary repairs were quickly made on board the Avenger, and then the hold was opened, and honest Bob superintended the raising and placing of the new guns which were to take the places of those that had been disabled in the recent encounter.

"That fight cost me a pretty penny," mused Jack, "and I should not care to repeat it often; but I have disposed of Ironhand and his murderous crew forever, and it was well worth the outlay."

Harold saw that the ship had out all the sails she could carry without diminishing her speed, and then he watched Bob at his work, Master Timothy being engaged in dressing the wounds of some of the men who had received more or less dangerous wounds during the fight.

"That's better work than trying to entrap brave Jack Tempest, you'll allow," remarked Tom Trumper, who sat near, smoking a short pipe.

"Verily, the service of your master is a remunerative one," answered Master Tim, with his tongue in his cheek and jingling the money in his pocket; "and I shall take home a goodly wage to Mistress Timothy and the juveniles. Amo, amas, amat, you know; but methinks the crew are at times too jovial."

"Why so, Master Sawbones?"

"It does not behoove the dignity of the law, nor the consequence of the learned professions, to be raised aloft in alto relievo, as it were, by the—well, by the posterior of the unmentionables—and deposited neck and crop in a receptacle designed for the use of the waste-water of the kitchen."

"Oh, you don't like that, eh? Why, that's only fun, you know!"

"But, verily, it is fun of too boisterous a nature to suit the dignity of the law, as aforesaid, and I do not know, whether, in hoc signo vinces, as it might be, that I would not be warranted in bringing a suit, descensus averni, for damages."

"Oh, your breeches will get all the damages you want," snickered Tom, "though, as for your head, that's too thick to hurt."

Master Timothy was so incensed at this that he sprang up in order to resent the insult with all the strength of his big hands.

Something seemed to hold him, and he gave an extra tug, when away came the seat of his breeches, as aforesaid, leaving him in a condition which made him not altogether presentable before ladies.

To be brief, the bench on which he was sitting had been coated by Tom with a thick layer of the stickiest kind of pitch, which held on to the cloth of his don't-mention-thems, so firmly as to tear away a good square foot of that garment.

Tom set up a roar and bolted on deck, but Master Timothy did not care to follow him in his present dishabille, and instead, he retired to his room, more impressed than ever with the joking propensities of his shipmates.

When night came on the pirate was still ahead and sailing free, our hero not having yet recovered the advantage which she had gained upon him.

He kept on all sail, however, feeling sure that he would come within range of his enemy before morning.

From the foretop there presently shone a bright light, which made their path over the ocean as plain as though the sun shone on it, and revealed the pirates several miles ahead, sailing at full speed.

This light was kept up at intervals during the night, and at every occasion the pirate was seen still trying to get away, while Jack was slowly drawing nearer.

When day broke she was seen just rounding a projecting point of rocks at the extremity of a small island, the cliffs beyond veiling her from sight.

Jack followed carefully; but, when near the bay in which the pirate queen must have taken shelter, the lookout informed him that there was not water enough beyond to float them, and that they must stand off again or be wrecked.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN THE DEN OF THE TIGRESS.

"We must put about, Captain, or run aground," cried Ned Spanker, who was keeping a sharp lookout ahead.

The Avenger, therefore, sought deeper water just outside a line of reefs, and only just in time was the maneuver executed, for in another moment she would have run upon the sharp rocks.

Jack skirted along in the deep water outside the reefs, and presently caught sight of the pirate snugly anchored at the end of a little bay, half screened from sight by a mass of rocks.

Her stern was in range, and Jack sent one or two shots toward the spot, knocking away a portion of the taffrail, and smashing the binnacle.

In a moment, however, the men on the rocks—a number of them could be seen hard at work—he had warped the vessel further into the passage, and nothing could be seen of her except the tops of her masts.

The entrance of a large cavern in the rocks could be seen, and in this Edna now appeared, evidently giving orders to her men.

Presently those on board the Avenger saw the topmasts of the pirate disappear, so that there was now nothing visible which could serve for a mark.

"We can drive them into their nests, at all events, and keep them from coming out," suggested Harold.

"That is what I was thinking of," returned Jack, quickly. "Ahoy, there, Bob; give them a shot."

The sturdy boatswain ran out a gun, and in a minute or so a shot went whistling through the air, and struck the rock just above the entrance to the cave.

Instantly there was a scattering, and Edna withdrew, shaking her fist at her persistent foes.

Her escape was a narrow one, however, for Harold had sprung to a gun which had just been loaded, and, lowering it a trifle, had fired it.

Crash went the shot right into the cave, and from the mouth issued a cloud of smoke.

"Good!" cried Jack, excitedly. "By Jove, Hal, that was well aimed."

Old Bob sent another shot where Harold's had entered, plowing up the flinty rocks, and scattering the fragments on all sides.

"We can't batter down their house, perhaps," he muttered, with a grin, "but we can keep them within doors."

The pirates had now all disappeared, but as Jack was confident that there was no other way for them to get out, except by exposing themselves to his fire, he was not at all discouraged.

"The tigress evidently did not expect that I was going to follow her so closely," he said to Harold. "That light in the foretop helped me, for otherwise this wily creature would have escaped me."

"That was a good shot," cried Harold, as a large portion of the roof of the cave entrance fell in with a crash, battered down by one of old Bob's persuaders. "I tell you, that is a dangerous passage now."

"It will be more so before long," was the quiet answer.

"What do you mean?"

"I am going to force an entrance to the pirates' lair, and rout them out at the point of the sword."

"I am with you, old fellow!"

"Agreed, Hal; but someone must stay aboard to look out for any flank movement."

"You can't run the vessel up there?"

"No; but I can take the boats."

"You will wait for darkness?"

"No, as it will then be a more difficult matter to watch these vermin, there being so many crannies for them to crawl into."

"You will make a day assault?"

"Most assuredly, for if these fellows appear on the rocky landing yonder in too great numbers for us to handle, our guns will quickly scatter them."

"Bravo, Jack; the scheme is worthy of you."

"Have the boats lowered and manned at once, Hal, and pick out the best men we have."

"Aye, aye, old fellow, I'll take the very flower of our crew."

"Let Bob, Tom and a good score of brave fellows stay on board, and put eight men and an officer into each boat, and send the long boat, as full as it will hold, to land on the rocks at the right, and keep on a lookout for surprises."

In ten minutes the boats were lowered, Jack heading one, Harold another, and Ned Spanker a third, and having got safely around the reefs, were pulled towards the rocky ledge in front of the cave.

On board the Avenger old Bob Gaskitt kept a watch on the shore, being ready at a moment's notice to bombard the pirates should they appear.

Jack's boat was in advance, and after proceeding for about five minutes from the time they entered the bay, our hero caught sight of the pirate vessel lying at anchor, screened from the sight of his own ship by a precipitous cliff.

"We'll bring a cannon or two in here and open fire upon her presently," he mused; "but just now I must look after other things."

No one was seen on board the pirate, and if there were any men there they must have been below.

Jack stood up in the bow of the boat, sword in hand, and when it ran alongside the rocks he sprang lightly out and beckoned to Harold to follow.

"Now, then, to attack the tigress in her den!"

With drawn swords the two brave lads sprang into the entrance of the cave and hurried along beneath its frowning arches, every nerve strung to the highest pitch.

At a distance of about twenty feet the passage made a sharp turn, and here, in a wider, lighter, higher part of the cave, they suddenly saw two figures hurrying toward them.

The foremost figure was that of Edna Lecompte, the Witch of the Waves.

The other was the man whom they both thought they had disposed of forever, Ivan Ironhand, the pirate.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PIRATES.

"Ironhand!" cried Jack, in the most intense surprise.

"The same; and this time you shall not escape me."

"I thought you dead."

"But I still live. Seeing that my ship was doomed, I left it and swam to that of Edna, being unseen by you in the confusion."

"And left your crew to perish, I suppose?" said Harold, with a sneer.

"No. Lieutenant Satan, whom you have seen before, escaped with me."

"But now you shall die!" hissed Jack, springing forward.

Blade to blade, steel clashed against steel, and once more Ironhand and Jack Tempest met in deadly combat.

Harold leaped forward and engaged the pirate queen in a duel to the death.

Ironhand was not only a powerful, but a most skillful swordsman as well, but in Jack Tempest he had no mean antagonist.

Edna, too, was most expert with the sword, but Harold was nearly the equal of Jack, and he fought his tigerish opponent with all the coolness of an old swordsman.

"Curse them!" hissed Ironhand. "Can we not conquer two boys?"

"Jack Tempest will never be conquered by such as you!"

"And I will not yield, save when my captain bids me."

"Hark!" cried Ironhand, "the rash youths are surrounded!"

"Now yield ye, dog of a pirate!" cried Jack, attacking his man more vigorously than ever, "for the men approaching are of my own gallant band."

By a bold stroke Harold sends the sword of the witch flying from her, and it falls with a clash upon the stone floor.

Brave Jack Tempest summons all his skill, and in an instant disarms Ironhand.

Like an avalanche he rushes upon his foe and hurls him to the ground.

Snap!

The steel has met some resisting surface, and the point of the blade is broken.

The pirate wears a shirt of mail beneath his uniform, and this has saved his life.

"Quick, Hal, your sword!" cries Jack. "At the villain's throat!"

The sound of footsteps grows louder, and half a score of men suddenly appear behind the two brave boys.

They are the men from the Avenger.

The witch has retreated, but she now reappears with a large force.

"Upon them!" she shrieks.

"Down with the sea thieves!" roars Jack. "Upon them, Avengers!"

Another detachment of the brave boys now appears, and the pirates are driven back.

Ironhand leaps to his feet in the rush and grapples with Jack.

Lieutenant Satan rushes to his master's aid, dagger in hand.

He aims a blow under Ironhand's arm at the young commander's heart.

At the instant Jack has cleverly tripped his assailant.

The point of Satan's dagger penetrates the joints of Ironhand's mailed coat just under the left armpit.

The weapon is wrenched from his grasp, as the pirate falls headlong, Jack on top.

Its sharp point is driven by the concussion deep into the pirate's side.

"Ha! I am killed!" groans the crime-stained villain.

Ironhand falls, limp and cold, on the hard ground, the blood gushing from his mouth in a crimson flood.

"Thus perish all our foes!" cries Jack. "Upon them, brave hearts, and be your cry:

"Extermination!"

Edna has fled, and Satan is flying. The pirates fall back in dismay before the terrific onslaught of their enemies, and the cavern rings with the shouts of victory.

In a large central cavern just beyond, the pirates have made a last stand, determined to fight to the death.

Jack has been reinforced by nearly the entire crew of the Avenger, and now the combat increases in fury.

The rocky walls resound with the clamor, and send the confused hum of sound echoing again and again through the vaulted passages and caverns of the pirates' lair.

Single-handed against half a dozen brawny ruffians Jack fights, breaking down the guard of one and disarming him, closing with another and bringing him to his feet with one stroke, and then, quickly recovering himself, parrying the blows of two more, and darting in between them and slaying a third, seemingly tireless—never caught unawares.

Harold quickly flies to his assistance, having beaten down two stalwart bravos who had opposed his passage; and then, side by side, the gallant boys cleave their way through the surging mass of their enemies, and made a path for their daring comrades behind to follow.

Across the large apartment they are driven, with great loss; those that remain taking shelter in a smaller room beyond.

This has evidently been used as an armory, and by the light of the huge, swinging lamp suspended from the roof, Jack can see scattered around barrels of gunpowder and stacks of arms, while weapons of defense of all kinds hang upon the walls.

Suddenly one of the pirates leaps upon a barrel, where he can be distinctly seen by all, and, pistol in hand, cries fiercely:

"Desist! or, by heaven, I will fire and blow the whole place to eternity!"

One shot fired at the barrel beneath him would blow its contents and everything else in the place into fragments.

The man looks desperate enough to do it, and the pirates fall back in dismay.

Not so Jack Tempest, however.

Like a flash of light his sword gleams in the air, and then sweeps like a meteor right at the heart of the braggart.

In an instant it has passed right through his body, and he falls in an inanimate mass upon the stone floor.

"Yield, you dogs!" cries Jack, "or I will not spare a man among you."

They will not yield, and the brave boys charge them again, the fight lasting until every man of the pirate horde is either dead or dying.

CHAPTER XXV.

MASTER TIMOTHY AND HIS TORMENTORS.

When the last man has been cut down, Jack, his reeking sword in his hand, cries to his gallant followers:

"Now to search this nest of rats and bear away the treasure that lies concealed within its gloomy recesses."

He is about to lead the way when a dull boom is heard, as though an explosion had taken place outside.

The sound is repeated twice, each time louder than before, and then comes the echo of men's voices cheering lustily.

"What is that?" cries Harold.

"We must go and see; come."

They hurry from the place, and in a few minutes reach the shores of the little bay.

A mass of white smoke hovers above the water, slowly dispersing by the action of the breeze, but of the pirate vessel not a sign is seen.

Then, on the surface of the water, as the smoke clears away, may be seen numerous charred and blackened fragments, shreds of sails, broken timbers and shattered planks, floating out with the tide.

Bob Gaskitt advances at this moment and says, with a grin:

"We found nobody on board the pirate to speak of, Captain, and thinking that there was no further use for such a craft, we blowed her up with her own magazine."

"After charging the fellows that tried to stop us into the water amongst the sharks," added Ned Spanker.

"Was there any treasure on board?"

"Aye, and we looked after that and landed the best of it before we blowed her up. What luck inside, Captain?"

"The pirates are all slain."

"And the queen fiend of them all—has she gone to glory—I beg your pardon, I means t'other region?"

"We have not seen her. Neither she nor Satan."

"H'm! her and Satan is good company, and perhaps he is going to take her down to where he lives, in the crater of some of the volcanoes of these islands."

"It is the pirate lieutenant I speak of, Ironhand's first officer."

"H'm! well, I dare say, he is not wrongly named, for they were all imps of the evil one."

"Let us return and recover the treasure concealed here, and then set sail for other seas and engage in other adventures."

The brave lads then made a complete survey of the cavern, passing through from end to end, and discovering many hidden recesses where treasures amounting to hundreds of thousands were found.

Bales of costly silks and rich stuffs from the East, chests bursting with jewels of every description, bags upon bags of gold coin, trunks filled with gold and silver ornaments of the finest description, rich rugs, hangings and furs, arms of all sorts, and stores of the rarest, finest wines were found among other things, there being the utmost profusion of riches hidden away in the cavern.

Of Edna and the pirate lieutenant there was no trace, but it was evident that they had fled to some other part of the island.

At one end of the cavern a secret passage was discovered by Harold, which led along the shore under a natural archway of rocks, and thence through a deep valley to the country beyond.

By this road the fugitives had undoubtedly made their way, for, search as they would, Jack and his comrades could find no trace of them.

The treasure was removed to the Avenger, every spare place being filled to repletion; Jack dividing the gold among his crew, and stowing the balance of the stuff found in the cave in the ship's hold.

At last, when everything was on board, Jack determined to blow up the cavern with the bodies of the slaughtered pirates, and thus give a lesson to all others who might feel disposed to follow their evil example.

A huge pile of barrels and kegs of gunpowder was made in the central cavern, which was closed up, with just room enough, however, to lay a fuse under the doors, and then a train was laid through the passage and out to the entrance of the cave which Jack's cannon had so battered.

The Avenger was made ready, and all but half a dozen of her crew went aboard.

Then Jack fired the train, and instantly sprang into a boat which had been left for him, the six seamen pulling towards the ship with all their might.

They were soon taken aboard, the boat hoisted up, and the Avenger, spreading all her sails to the freshening breeze, sped away from those fatal shores like a thing of life.

When a little over a mile from the island, there was suddenly heard a dull, booming sound, and all eyes were turned towards the cliffs.

"Look!" cried Harold, excitedly.

Suddenly a mass of rock shot up into the air to a great height and fell back into the sea with a resounding splash.

Fire and smoke burst from all sides, and explosion after explosion followed.

The earth seemed shaken to its lowest depths, the waters surged and roared, and the sky was black with the great clouds of smoke that poured from the mountain.

"Can that shock have awakened a volcano long since extinguished, and are the internal fires now bursting forth afresh?"

Thus asked Jack in awe, as he looked upon the terrible scene.

The Avenger made all speed away from a locality fraught with so much danger, but long after she had passed beyond the reach of the fiery stream from the mountain did our heroes behold it still spouting forth fire and smoke.

"The pirates have got a fiery grave after all," muttered Bob Gaskitt, "and one may well believe that Old Nick got up this show wholly on their account."

"Beyond a doubt," interposed Master Timothy, who always had to put in a word; "verily, I say, may we call this a case of flumen agitatus, otherwise an ignis fatuus, sent, forte dux, to punish those audacious lawbreakers. Were I in court, I should consider it good ground for an action gravamen digitur."

"Then, if you know what you're talking about, Master

Wisehead, you've got more learning than the whole ship's crew put together," remarked Bob, very wisely.

"Verily, Master Bob," answered the man of writs and processes in his pompous style, his big feet spread out over the deck and his big hands pressed to his bosom, "verily I am not without wit, and I will own that I do not know as much——"

As he stood there with his legs spread wide apart, Ned Spanker, dropping on all fours, suddenly ran under him, and when midway between his legs rose up quickly, lifting the worthy man completely off his feet.

Ned suddenly dropped him, not on the deck, but into a blanket held by four sturdy tars, who instantly gave it a toss, and sent Master Tim flying skywards.

At last Flossie begged the jokers to desist, and Master Timothy was permitted to go below, not very much the worse, to be sure, but as mad as a young bull when he sees a red petticoat.

"Verily, this is an outrage, a perfect *otium cum dig.*," sputtered the man, in his deep bass, "and were it convenient I believe I would get out and walk the remainder of my journey. Truly, the way of the councilor is hard."

That night the island, with its volcano, was out of sight, and the Avenger was dashing over the ocean on the equator, bound to whatever land her young captain saw fit to steer for, and yet, though he knew it not, fate was guiding him, and many strange things were destined to happen to him, seemingly without any volition of his own.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A REVELATION.

Two days after leaving the Gallapagos, the Avenger was struck by a gale which at first threatened to bring our hero's career to a sudden termination.

They were obliged to run before the wind, however, and were driven far to the south of where they had intended going.

Jack had made up his mind to run over to China and pay that curious country a visit; but the gale interfered with his calculations—for the time being, at least—and when the wind subsided he found himself in the neighborhood of a small group of almost unknown islands in the South Pacific.

Thinking that perhaps it would be well to get a supply of fresh fruit and vegetables, and give the men a possible chance to enjoy a day's hunting, Jack determined to stop at the largest of the islands, get what he wanted, and then set sail for China.

In the course of an hour they came near enough to see that a commotion of some kind was taking place on the largest island, the beach being lined with natives running to and fro, while upon a headland, some fifty feet deep above, could be seen several persons gesticulating wildly and making signals, with the evident intent of attracting the vessel's attention.

"They may be hostile, and the place a dangerous one to visit in consequence," suggested Harold. "We had better be cautious."

"One broadside would scatter a whole fleet of their canoes," laughed Jack, "and they, no doubt, take us for inhabitants of the air, come to visit them. They will receive us with great honor, no doubt."

Meanwhile, the Avenger was heading for a little bay where there was good anchorage and abundant shelter from the boisterous winds of the outer ocean.

As the ship swept into this bay, and Jack was about to cast anchor, Harold suddenly caught his arm and cried:

"Look, look! take the glass and look upon that figure descending the path. That is no savage."

It was that of a woman, apparently of middle age, her hair being almost white, though her figure was straight and well rounded.

"It is a white woman!" cried Jack; "and see, she beckons to us; she stretches out her arms as if to detain us. She hurries down the path as if to be the first to greet us."

"She may be a captive among these people, and if so, we must rescue her from them."

"Perhaps she will not want to leave them."

"Poor creature!" murmured Flossie, who stood near. "What a sad life she must lead among these wild people. My heart bleeds for her. Will you not take her away?"

"If she wishes it. Have a boat lowered, Hal, and we will go ashore. The men had better go armed, and let Bob prepare to give those fellows a warm reception should they attempt to trouble us."

"Will you cast anchor?"

"No; simply heave to and put the sails aback."

The ship's head was turned up into the wind, the jibs hauled to windward, and the helm put amidships, the Avenger lying almost idle on the water, her sails hanging loose from the yards, or furled so as not to draw the wind.

A boat was lowered containing Jack, Harold, and eight sturdy seamen, all armed to the teeth, for it would not do to trust these guileless savages too far.

The gallant tars laid back on their oars, and the boat flew through the water toward the sandy beach.

As they drew nearer, Jack could easily distinguish the white woman from the rest, and presently she waved back the dusky horde, and advanced alone down the shining sands close to the water's edge.

"God speed you, brave gentlemen," she cried, in a voice full of emotion, as the boat came within hail, "and welcome to these shores."

"By Jove! Jack, she looks strangely like some one," murmured Harold, "someone we have seen."

As the boat touched the sands, Jack jumped out, and advancing, said, pleasantly:

"I presume, madam, that your people regard our ship as some strange bird, come to pay them a visit?"

"My people?" said the woman, sadly. "Alas! where are my people now, where the friends that once flocked around me?"

"You are a captive among these natives?"

"No, not a captive, but a prisoner, perhaps, inasmuch that until now I have given up all hope of ever seeing my native land again."

"You shall go away on my ship. It is the Avenger, and I am Captain Jack Tempest, a rover, a free lance, an avenger of wrongs."

"What would it suffice me to go with you now? Doubtless my kinsmen are all dead, and I am forgotten long since."

"If we had sped by without landing it would have disappointed you, and why not, therefore, go with us? There are ladies aboard, and you will find friends, for I have a heart to pity all unfortunate and an arm to avenge their wrongs."

"You speak bravely, and I will go with you. Perhaps those who have wronged me still live, and though I have tried to forgive them, I still find a feeling of revenge arising in my heart."

"You were wrecked on this island?"

"No; I was abandoned, cruelly deserted by a wretch who should have protected me. Separated from my infant child, left alone among savage tribes, I have lived here until I have

forgotten how long it is, hoping against hope, praying for relief, but finding all my prayers unanswered."

"By heaven, Jack," whispered Harold, hoarsely, "do you not see the likeness of that terrible woman in the face of this poor creature? Perhaps she——"

"What woman, Hal?"

"Edna Lecompte."

"Edna Lecompte! Do not speak of her; she is accursed."

"You know her then—the pirate queen, the Witch of the Waves?"

"Know her?" wailed the poor woman. "Alas, yes. You see her looks in my face? I do not wonder, for that heartless woman is my own sister!"

"Your sister!" repeated Jack and Harold in a breath.

"Yes; and to her I owe all my misery—all my misfortune!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

JACK LISTENS TO A STRANGE RECITAL.

Jack's astonishment at learning that the unfortunate woman before them was the sister of Edna, the pirate queen, may easily be imagined.

"Had I met you under other circumstances, madam," said he, "I should have taken you for the pirate queen herself, for the likeness is very strong."

"Then you have seen that unhappy woman?"

"Yes, and we have just come from her island retreat, which we destroyed."

"Then she is dead?"

"We know not, but it is more than likely that she has escaped. Will you go on board my ship?"

"Yes, willingly would I give up this life, willingly return to my home, even though I should find it in ruins and my friends all dead."

"You have had a sad life here among these savage creatures."

"The more so, my dear sir, when I think of the past. Once I was the Countess Fairmount, the mistress of large estates in England, the wife of a noble-hearted man, the mother of as beautiful a child as ever the sun shone on."

"Edna and I were sisters, and resembled each other greatly, though I may say, without false pride, that I was the more attractive. I married the Earl of Fairmount, and she ran away with an adventurer, Pierre Lecompte, an unprincipled Frenchman."

"He became a pirate, and she, to show her pique—for she had wished to marry the earl herself—never failed to publish the relationship between us, which so mortified my husband that he died within a year after the birth of my darling Frederica, the sweetest child that was ever born."

"The shame which had killed my husband followed me, and the noble families of the neighborhood began to look down upon and despise me, my cruel sister never failing, upon the slightest opportunity, to let everyone know that I was her sister."

"Lecompte was taken, after a desperate encounter with an English war-vessel, and brought to England, where he was publicly hanged."

"He boasted of having for a sister-in-law the noble Countess Fairmount, and swore that if I cared to use my influence I might save him, but that if I did not he would put a curse upon me."

"I would have interceded for him for my sister's sake, but she treated my advances with scorn, and reviled me all the more; trying to heap greater disgrace upon my head, and

announcing that it was I who had driven her from home and forced her to wed the villain Lecompte."

"This cruel attack threw me into a fever, and I was unconscious for weeks, hovering between life and death the while, the wisest physicians despairing of my recovery."

"At last I came out of the jaws of death and regained my health, but meanwhile the pirate had been hanged for the want of my intercession, I being too unwell to know of anything that took place, and Edna had fled, no one knew where."

"My neighbors looked down upon me and despised me, so I resolved to take my child and seek the new land of America, where she could grow up in purity and innocence, never knowing how her poor mother had suffered."

"Leaving my affairs in charge of a solicitor, I took passage in a ship bound for America, looking forward to a brighter life in the new land."

"Alas for all human hopes! The vessel was attacked by pirates when half-way across the ocean, and when the cargo had been taken and her crew and officers murdered, was set on fire, that no trace of the crime might be discovered."

"The pirate captain was one Ivan Ironhand, as he called himself, and with him, to my horror, was Edna Lecompte, now styled the Witch of the Waves, and as lawless a freebooter as any man engaged in that unholy traffic."

"I and my daughter were saved, but it was not mercy nor tenderness which prompted the action, for my cruel sister was as pitiless as ever, and as unsparing as a beast of prey."

"Soon after this another ship was captured, but this time it was not destroyed, and some of the sailors were spared, it being my sister's intention to take command of this vessel and continue her piratical career in the Pacific."

"My greatest trial was now to come, for my darling babe was torn from me and carried away in Ironhand's vessel, while I remained with my heartless sister."

"The ship bearing my treasure sank behind the horizon, and all hope died in my heart, the cruel Edna laughing at my tears and loading me with abuse."

"After many weary months spent on the ocean, during which time Edna made many rich conquests, we sighted these islands, and I was put on shore among the savages, to be murdered, as I thought."

"Alas! Heaven was still pitiless, and the natives, thinking me mad, stayed their hands and permitted me to live, treating me with every mark of consideration and respect, and finally making me their queen and ruler, but never permitting me to think of leaving, although at long intervals ships appeared off the island."

"By degrees the bitterness of my grief was assuaged, and I began to think if I could not do something for these poor people to raise and improve their condition."

"One by one they gave up their idols, and worshiped the one and only true God, abandoning their blind devotion to blocks of wood and stone, and embracing the Christian religion."

"It has taken years to accomplish this, but at last my labors have been rewarded, and I have much to be thankful for, cannibalism and idol worship having been abandoned, war and bloodshed giving way to peace and industry, and now there are not a happier people in all the world than my islanders."

"There wants but one thing now to complete my happiness—to see my native land once more, and to know if my child lives or not, for this suspense is dreadful; and you can be sure that the appearance of your vessel in the harbor was to me like the coming of a messenger from Heaven."

"I know it was not chance that sent you, and willingly will I go with you, for your noble young face tells me that you can be trusted. I will speak to my people, for otherwise they will not permit you to take me away, as they regard me almost as a god."

"Ah, what joy to think of home once more; to feel that, perhaps, I shall clasp my darling to my bosom once more! I shall know her despite the lapse of time—despite the changes that must of necessity have taken place in her."

"Tell me," cried Jack, struck by a sudden thought which came like a hurricane upon him, "was there anything by which you could identify your child—any marks upon her person or clothing?"

"Her little garments were embroidered in silk, with a coronet and the letters 'F. F.,' standing for her name—Frederica Fairmont."

"Or Flossie Fairleigh!" cried Harold. "Jack, my brave captain, the waves have brought you a treasure, indeed."

"Then, madam," answered Jack, with the most intense excitement, "your child lives, and is on board yonder vessel!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

REUNITED.

"My daughter alive!" repeated the Countess Fairmount, with heaving bosom, and exhibiting signs of the deepest emotion.

"There can be no doubt of it, my dear madam."

"Can this be true? Oh, I have not hoped for so much happiness!"

"Stay. Was your child dark or fair?"

"Her complexion was a delicate pink and white. No sea-shell ever showed a more delicate pink, the snow could not compare with her delicate limbs for whiteness. Her hair was like spun gold, and even when a child it fell like a golden shower over her dainty shoulders."

"And her eyes, did they not rival the blue of the heavens in their purity and clearness?"

"Yes, yes! And her lashes were long and silky, and swept her perfect cheeks with their soft fringe."

"Then my darling Flossie, my sweet wife, can be none other than your child. She was wrecked on the North American coast some seventeen years ago, and was adopted by my uncle, Roderick Warden, who called her Flossie Fairleigh, those names corresponding to the letters embroidered on her clothing."

"But the wreck?"

"It was not known what the ship was; but just about that time there appeared in our neighborhood a fierce pirate, who called himself Ivan of the Iron Hand, afterward termed Ironhand."

"From time to time after that he appeared and devastated our shores, being joined some years later by Edna Lecompte, the Witch of the Waves."

"Don't you remember how anxious they both seemed to possess Flossie, and how Ironhand wished her for his wife?" asked Hal.

"Yes; and Edna herself did not wish to harm her, but without a doubt it was only because she desired to work her some greater evil."

"And she is now on your vessel?" asked the poor mother, anxiously.

"Yes, madam, and is my wife, and a sweeter girl never drew the breath of life. My uncle would have married her to a young rake, one Roger Wildrake, my worst enemy, but I bore her away one night, and now she is my wife."

"And you are——"

"Captain Jack Tempest, of the Brazilian navy. A free rover, the foe of all tyrants, the scourge of pirates."

"Tempest? There was a noble family by that name in England. Sir Templeton Tempest was one of the bravest men that ever lived."

"He was my grandfather; my mother married Roderick Warden's brother, but at her death I took her name instead

of his. My uncle slandered her memory, and I would not bear his name after that."

"We must get aboard, Jack," whispered Harold. "The savages are beginning to grow impatient at our long talk, and are regarding us with anything but pleasant looks."

"I will speak to them," said the countess, quietly; and turning to the savages, who had gradually drawn nearer, she addressed them in her own language:

"My people, the time has come when I must leave you. On yonder vessel my darling child awaits me; these brave gentlemen have come to take me to the home I have not seen for so long a time. My heart is sad at having to part with you, but it cannot be otherwise."

"Let the white chief bring our mother's child to the island, and we will make her a princess. We will love her, and she shall marry one of our young chiefs."

"She is the wife of the young white chief, and your laws forbid a woman to have more than one husband. She cannot leave her husband's house, and so I must go to her."

"Hasten, my friends," she then cried to Jack, as she took his arm and allowed him to lead her to the boat. "Argument is useless, and we must use cunning."

As she stepped into the boat and Jack and Harold followed quickly, the savages rushed forward as if to prevent her, while a dozen canoes were launched in a moment.

"Fire—fire in the air!" cried Harold, excitedly. "Don't hurt anyone, but make a noise."

Thereupon every man in the boat discharged his pistols, and Bob Gaskitt, on board the Avenger, hearing the report, fired a broadside over the heads of our friends, doing no damage, but making a great clamor.

As the unusual sounds reverberated upon the air, the savages, startled and terror-stricken, fell upon their faces on the sand, while those in the canoes pulled to shore instantly, and fled precipitately to the shelter of the woods.

"Pull, my boys, pull heartily!" cried Jack, and the men lay back on their oars with a will, and made the boat fairly hum through the water.

Standing up in the stern sheets Jack cried aloud with all his might as they drew nearer:

"Up with your helm, make sail, slack your sheets, throw us a line aft."

"Aye—aye, Captain Jack!" and the sturdy tars, under Bob's direction, began to put the ship under way with all despatch, and the vessel began to speed through the water as one of the sailors caught the line towing astern.

Soon the boat was hoisted upon deck, and the countess was conducted by Jack to the quarterdeck.

Wondering what the confusion and the sudden departure meant, Flossie was standing at the taffrail gazing toward the shore when Jack approached.

She turned around, and at sight of her the castaway uttered a cry, and clasped her hand to her heart.

"My God! She is the living image of her father!" she whispered.

Flossie, upon her part, seemed greatly agitated.

"Frederica!" cried the countess, do you not know me? I am——"

"Frederica?" cried Flossie. "Ah, now I remember that name, and who it was that gave it me. Mother! have I found you at last?"

Then, with a glad cry, Flossie threw herself into her mother's arms, and shed tears of gladness, her golden-crowned head pressed against the loving heart of the countess, the latter's arms pressing her closely to her breast.

"Thank Heaven for this," murmured the now happy woman, and Jack breathed a silent confirmation of the prayer as he gazed upon this tender reunion.

The natives of the island pursued them in their canoes, but were soon left in the distance.

The next day they were on the broad ocean, with not a sail, not a speck of land in sight, and steering for China, which Jack had taken a notion to visit.

The run to the Chinese coast was made in good time and without incident; and Jack, disguising himself as a Brazilian, sailed up to Hong Kong, and boldly landed, despite the fact that the port belonged to his old enemies, the British.

He and Harold, with their wives, were received with great distinction by the resident governor, and invited to a grand dinner and reception at the mansion house.

It was late when Jack and his party left the mansion house, and as they were proceeding toward the ship they were suddenly set upon by a party of Chinese thieves.

Jack's sword was in his hand in an instant, and, rushing pell-mell into the crowd, he cut down two or three of his assailants, calling loudly to Harold to back him up.

He heard a sudden exclamation in English, and saw one of the thieves trying to escape.

Seizing a lantern from one of his own men, Jack leaped forward and caught the fugitive by the throat, at the same time flashing the light in his face.

"Roger Wildrake!"

Wildrake—for he it was, indeed—struggled hard to escape, and called out in Chinese to the others, who quickly tore him from Jack's grasp, and made off with all speed.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JACK RUNS AWAY WITH AND FROM HIS ENEMIES.

"So Master Roger Wildrake has turned up in China," mused Jack, as he sat in his cabin that night, "and at the head of a lot of Chinese thieves?"

The next morning as Jack was making preparations to leave the harbor and go in search of pirates, he saw a cutter, manned by six men, and headed by an officer with a plentiful supply of gold lace on his coat and cap, approaching the ship, and already close at hand.

In a few minutes it came alongside, and the officer, mounting the ship's side, stepped on deck, and advancing, said imperiously:

"Captain Jack Tempest, you are my prisoner!"

"Upon what authority?"

"That of the king!"

"Who is your informant?"

"One Sir Roger Wildrake, captain of the sloop-of-war *Absolute*, of his Majesty's navy."

Jack understood now, and he resolved to take a shrewd course.

He drew the officer to one side, and convinced him that this order for arrest was part of the plan to capture the pirates. He was to appear as a fugitive, and was to escape from the seeming attempts of the British to capture him, and therefore gain the confidence of the pirates and take them unawares.

Jack's impudence carried the day, and the English captain was completely humbugged.

He thought Jack a clever fellow, drank of his wine, took breakfast with him, laughed at his jokes, and attempted some himself, though it must be said that they were very dreary affairs, and succeeded in getting most gloriously drunk inside of two hours.

Meanwhile Jack had given certain orders to Harold in French, and Harold had gone to execute them.

The result was that the lieutenant was sent down to the cabin, where he got as drunk as his captain. Furthermore, the *Avenger* passed boldly out under the very eyes of the British vessels, the commanders of which thought it was all

right, seeing the boat of the officers with the royal ensign at the stem, towing astern.

After awhile the boat with the men in it was cut adrift, and Jack sailed off in pursuit of the pirates, with two British officers as prisoners.

Half an hour later a sail was sighted to leeward, which seemed to be a Chinaman, and she was headed for the *Avenger*.

Jack headed for the open sea, and allowed the Chinaman to gradually overhaul her.

The black flag was run up on the Chinaman, while Jack displayed American colors.

At last, about three o'clock, when she had come within good range, the *Avenger* suddenly put about, and became the pursuer, bearing down upon her foe under all sail.

Before long the two vessels were in hail, and Jack, standing on the poop, called out:

"Ahoy there, Roger Wildrake! Dare you show your cowardly face?"

A man dressed in a European naval uniform, but wearing a turban and a broad red sash, sprang upon the high quarter-deck of the Chinaman, and waving a cimeter over his head, shouted loudly:

"Aye, Jack Tempest, I will indeed show my face, and my teeth, too, presently. You had best surrender quietly—you and the maiden you have kidnapped—or I will not answer for your life."

Meanwhile, as the vessels drew nearer, the *Avenger* had poured a double broadside upon the enemy, and swept many of her men from the decks.

Jack quickly put his vessel on another tack, and as she swept past he repeated the dose.

A collision could not now be prevented, and in a few seconds the two vessels came together with a crash.

Grappling-irons were thrown out, and the Chinese came swarming over the rail like rats.

There was not a man on board the *Avenger* but what fought with the utmost desperation, and though some were killed, others amply avenged their deaths.

Bob Gaskitt crammed hot-shot, covered with pitch, into his pet guns, and fired at the pirate's masts and sails, which were soon ablaze.

"Cut loose!" cried Jack at the top of his voice.

The *Avenger* fell off just in time, for, owing to the light material of which it was made, the Chinese vessel was now a mass of flames, and threatened to blow up in a short time.

Pell-mell upon the decks of the *Avenger* came the Chinese, Malays, Lascars, and Maoris, heeded by Wildrake, who went at Jack Tempest.

Their blades met in mid-air with a clash and a ringing sound, and then, quickly recovering himself, Jack made a quick thrust and ran his sword through his opponent's left lung, narrowly missing his heart.

He fell to the deck with an oath on his lips, his hands falling limp at his sides, the blood pouring from his mouth.

"My sword is polluted; never more will I use it!" cried Jack.

Then, seizing the blade by the point with his left hand and the hilt with the right, he quickly bent it double across his knee, and, breaking it into two pieces, hurled them into the sea.

Boom!

The flames had reached the magazine of the Chinaman, and she had blown up with a loud explosion, many of her crew perishing in the ruin.

"One more stroke and victory is ours!" cried Jack.

Picking up a sword, he rallied his forces and got them into one compact mass, and made a charge upon the pirates, who were driven over the sides of the vessel into the sea.

"Come aft, Jack," whispered Hal. "Wildrake is dying, and I think wants to say something."

Jack hurried aft, and Wildrake, still lying on the deck, looked, and said, faintly:

"You have conquered at last, Jack Tempest, and I have lost all. It was I who murdered Roderick Warden, and tried to fasten the crime on you. I went there to rob him, but he awoke, and in the struggle was killed. He thought it was you, and I did my best to convict you. I have been outwitted in everything. I have played my last card, and have lost. You have won. Curse you! Had I made as much of my opportunities as you have, we would now change places, and you would be lying— Ah!"

The blood gushed from his mouth, his head fell forward on his breast, his fingers moved convulsively, and then, with one last gasp, the conquered villain ceased to breathe, and passed from life to eternity.

CHAPTER XXX.

AROUND THE WORLD—THE LAST OF JACK'S ENEMIES.

After the battle with the pirate Jack had the necessary repairs made on his ship, and allowed his prisoners to roam at will, the officers having seen the fight, although they took no part in it.

"You made a gallant fight of it, sir," said the British captain to Jack. "But why were we prevented from joining?"

"Because I did not need your services."

"And who are you, let me ask?"

"Captain Jack Tempest; Sir Jack Tempest, if I choose to call myself so."

"An outlaw?"

"No; but a privateer, the enemy of your king, the foe to all pirates, the friend of the distressed of every nation."

"Then I suppose we must consider ourselves prisoners?"

"Only until I can land you at some convenient place, for I have no wish to detain you longer."

Jack was as good as his word, for at the end of a week he fell in with an English merchantman bound to Hong-Kong, and transferred his prisoners to her.

Some days after this, when close to the African coast, a number of boats put out from shore, the Avenger being becalmed, and Jack rightly guessed that their occupants were pirates.

He manned all his guns on one side, got up large quantities of ammunition and arms, and then, having received an evasive answer from the newcomers, ordered his men to fire.

Three of the boats were destroyed, and their occupants thrown into the water, many being killed at the first volley, the guns being pointed so as to take the enemy at a disadvantage.

The second volley knocked one of the boats clear out of the water, and killed a dozen men in the others, the small shot rattling about in the most annoying manner.

"Now, then, lower our own boats, and drive these pests back to their holes!" cried Jack.

Every boat they possessed was lowered, being quickly filled with brave fellows armed to the teeth.

They dashed at the pirates, and drove them to the shore, even beaching his boats, and driving the pirates to the shelter of the rocks.

Even here they were pursued, and when rallied by their two chief leaders, who now appeared, were driven back, foot by foot, and slaughtered man after man.

Suddenly Jack uttered a cry of astonishment.

"The Witch of the Waves!"

"And Satan, too!" added Harold.

The two notorious pirates were before them.

At last!" cried our hero, dashing forward, sword in hand.

A few quick passes, and Satan's sword flew from his hand, while Jack's blade entered his heart, and deprived him of life.

"Seize her!" cried Jack, pointing to Edna; and in an instant three or four stout fellows grasped the pirate queen and dragged her to the boats.

The surviving pirates were allowed to escape, but their vessel, which was found hidden away in a small bay shut in by precipitous cliffs, was run out and taken possession of.

The pirate's cave was discovered, and the treasure, of which there was a large amount, was taken out and put aboard the captured vessel.

This was then put in command of Harold, who agreed to take it home and dispose of the valuables it contained, a small but efficient crew accompanying him.

For the first time in many years he and Jack now parted, but as it would not be for long, the separation was not a sorrowful one.

Harold's wife and child, Master Timothy, Tom Trumper, and a dozen sailors went with the young lieutenant, both vessels proceeding together as far as the coast of France, when they parted.

Meanwhile Edna had been taken on board Jack's vessel, where, to her great surprise, she met the sister whom she had so cruelly wronged, and whom she believed to be dead.

Remorse took possession of her, and although she was carefully watched, she succeeded one night, soon after they had passed the Straits of Gibraltar, in eluding her guards and throwing herself overboard.

Her body was never recovered, though efforts were made to save her, and so perished the famous pirate queen, whose name had been so long a terror to peaceable merchants, as well as the captains of war vessels.

Flossie's mother did not long survive, and before they sighted the English coast she was dead, her body being carried to shore in order to establish the fact that she was actually dead.

Jack succeeded in making good Flossie's claims to the title and estates of her mother, and paid over to her a large sum of money which he had collected from the agents in charge.

Not caring to keep it, the estate was sold, and Flossie found herself a rich woman, Jack himself being now a person of great wealth.

After a long absence, Jack found himself back in America, settling, with Harold, in the United States, and becoming citizens of the republic, our hero, having established his innocence of the murder of his uncle, having no wish to return to British territory.

In the War of 1812 both Jack and Harold, now in the prime of life, were appointed to the command of vessels, and won not only fame, but fortune as well, so that to-day their grandsons, John Tempest and Harold Storms, are among the merchant princes of the country, and often recount to their children the stories which have been handed down from age to age, of the many gallant fights of the gallant CAPTAIN JACK TEMPEST.

THE END.

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